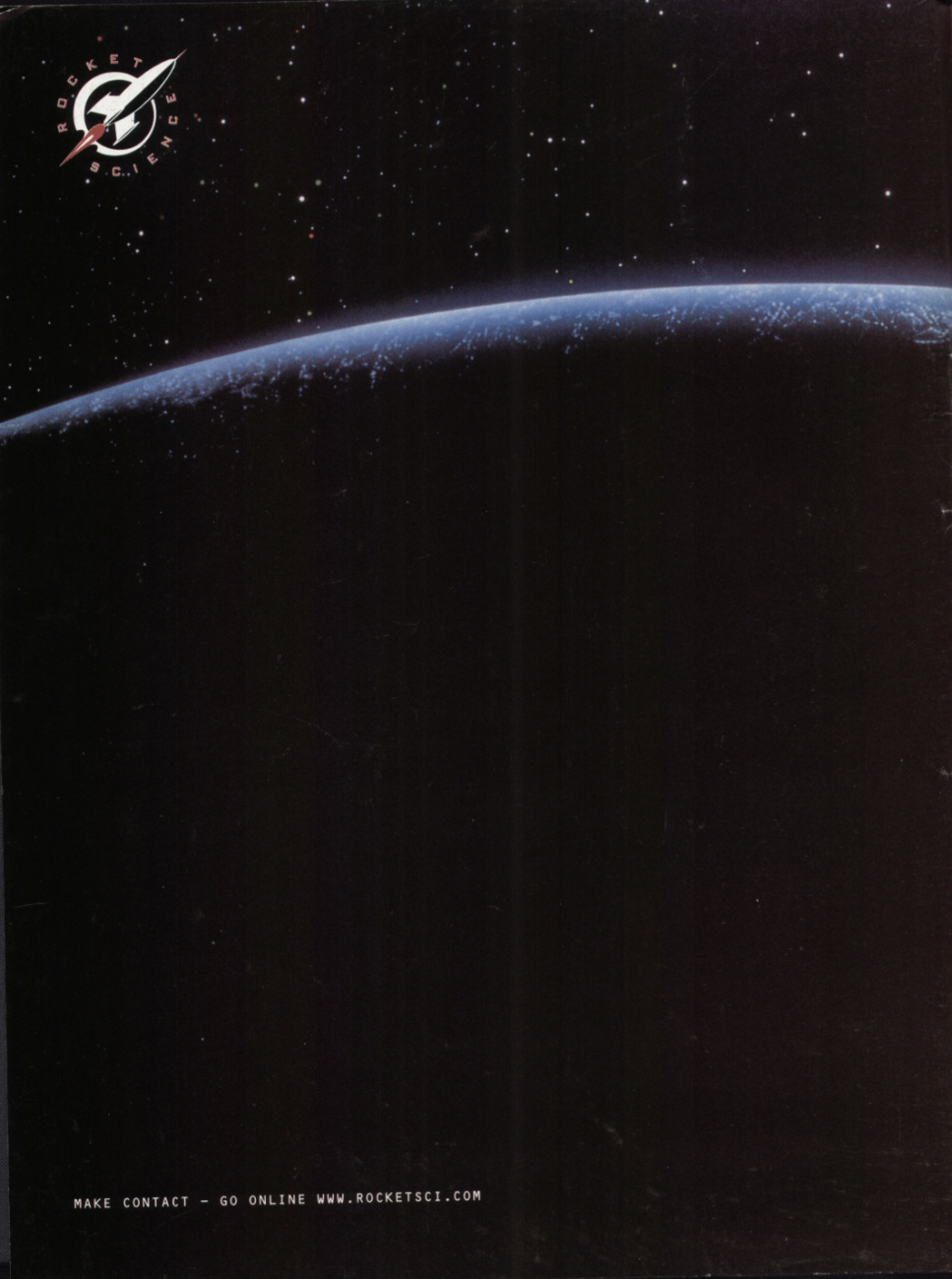
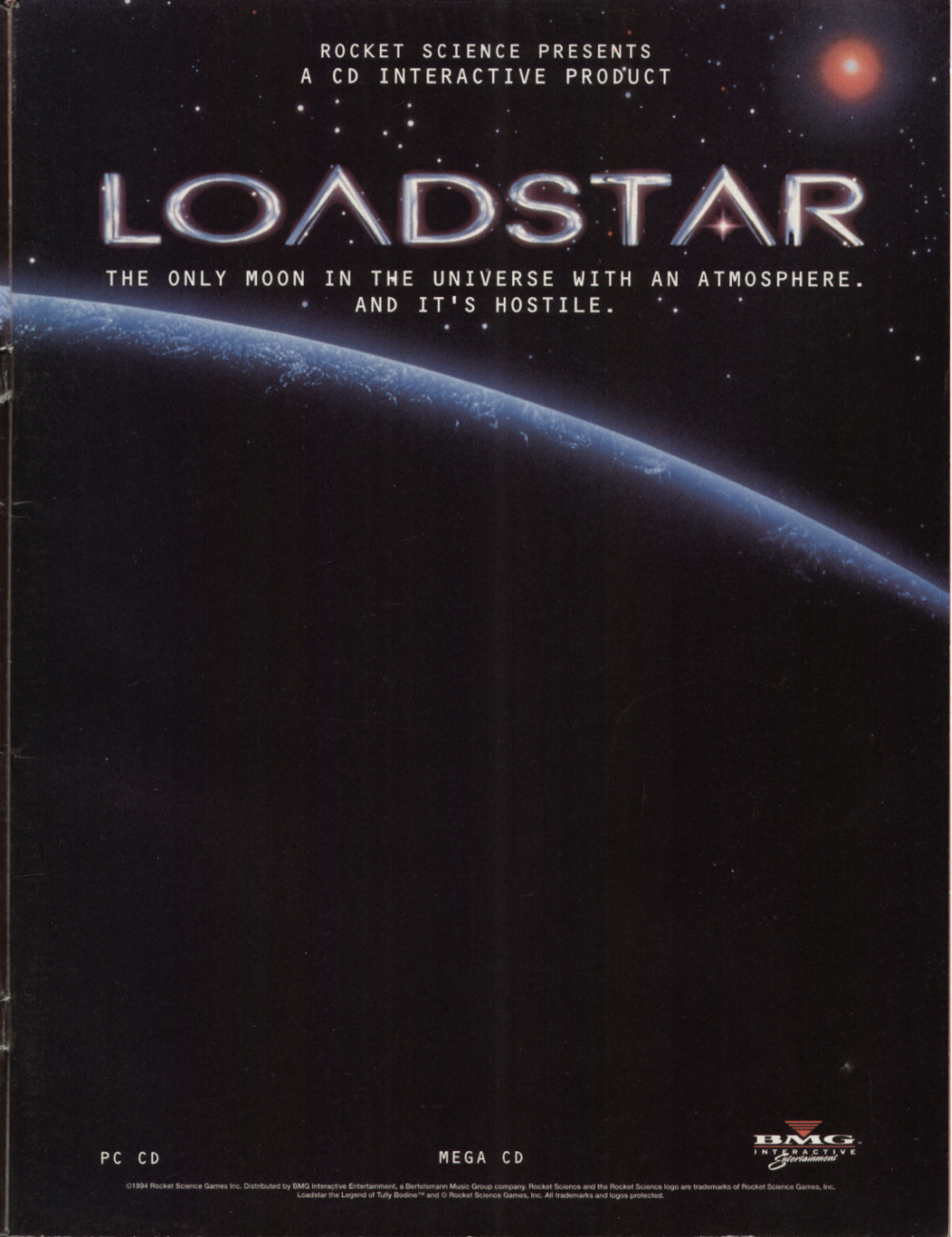

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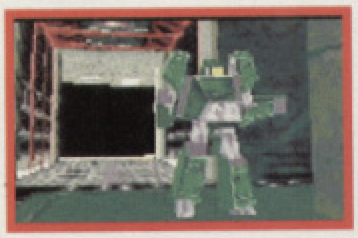
CO

COVER STORY 18

METAL HEAD

EXCLUSIVE

Originally intended as one of the 32X launch games, Metal Head is spending longer in development than Doom, Virtua Racing or Star Wars. It's an original concept, technically impressive and showcases the machine better than anything you've seen previously. We have the latest version — first and everything.



LOADSTAR

Rocket Science hiot the Mega-CD on page 112. You can't have everything, but this picture's very nice isn't it. We thought so.



REGULARS

REVIEWS

NTENTS

You
ice isn't



FEATURES

PREVIEWS

WHODUNNIT

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SPECIAL THANKS TO: Mev at Vivid Image. Katie at BBCV for the chance of a lifetime. Rob Partridge for good timing.
SPECIAL NO THANKS: The so-called big shark of publishing. That explains his hammer-head. (To the tune of Chirpy, Chirpy Cheep-Cheep...) Where's your audit now?. The in-the-post duo.

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GREAT UNANSWERED QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME: Nos 17 and 18
17: How many mickles do actually make a muckle, exactly? 18: Who knows the secret of the Black Magic box?

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN



STEVE

I'm feeling a bit ticked off this month, and the thorn in my side is that fountain of knowledge, Digitiser. Over the last couple of weeks they really seem to have had it in for the good ship MEAN MACHINES, and I really can't see what their problem is. We readily accept that you'll always get sniping between mags — I mean, we're always quick to have a dig at anyone if they make us laugh, as they do unto us. But for some reason we've really got on Digitiser's nerves. It was brought to my attention when a few readers informed me of their 'MEAN MACHINES IS DYING' shock horror headline, but since then they've had another pop. According to them, MEAN MACHINES is dying because our sales have gone from 100,000 to the 70,000 mark. What they forget to say is that other mags have fallen by a similar amount too, but — hey! — why get in the way of their story by burying it in facts! According to the people writing this, we're on our way out whilst they have over a million readers a week. Yes, but a number of people within the industry have pointed our that their million figure is accumulated over seven days and caters for owners of every format: Super NES, Megadrive, PC — even the C64 and Spectrums, judging by their recent features. By my reckoning, that leaves them with just over 142,000 people a day — less than the number of people who buy, say, MEAN MACHINES, Nintendo Magazine System, and CVG every month — dedicated readers who actually pay for their product, not channel surfers with a passing interest. After all, if we came out every two weeks, we'd probably sell as many on our own . If they have such a problem with us, I just wish they'd call me up and tell me what it is. After all, as they give away subscriptions to mags from a rival publishing company, it seems they could be just acting as a mouthpiece in some sort of pointless slanging match. I'll keep you posted if they do bother contacting me (but don't hold your breath, they'll probably just do me down within their six or seven pages), but until then I just wish they'd continue with their cutting edge articles on 'which is better: C64 and Spectrum', and stop their childish bickering, whilst we promise to carry on with more exclusives and in-depth reviews than ever before.
Oh well, enjoy the issue, it's a bit of a goodie...
Steve

PANTO WATCH UK

That great British tradition, the pantomime, is set to go into full swing. For hundreds of years, Aussie soap stars have come over to act in ways that make their Ramsay St. performances look like BAFTA material. PANTO WATCH UK has a mission to seek out the celebs that were once TV contenders, but are now doing Widow Twanky in Deptford. Each of our selection has a CHF or Career Hhumiliation Factor.

1. TOYAH WILCOX

Once a semi-respected chanteuse of New Romantic pop ("It's a myth-tery"), and actress in Derek Jarman films (snoot director). Now...
Toyah furthers her career as Peter Pan at the Chichester Festival Theatre, sharing top billing with Frank Finlay(?). Exactly.

2. LESLIE GRANTHAM

Previously, Dirty Den Watts of pass-the-razor-blades soap Eastenders. Left to avoid the nation's typecasting and pursue serious roles in TV drama. And...
Chasing Michaela Strachan's Pan in the guise of Captain Hook at the Richmond Theatre, Surrey. 30m viewers tuned in to see Den on Christmas Day 1987. Audiences might be a little more modest this year.

3. ROBERT POWELL

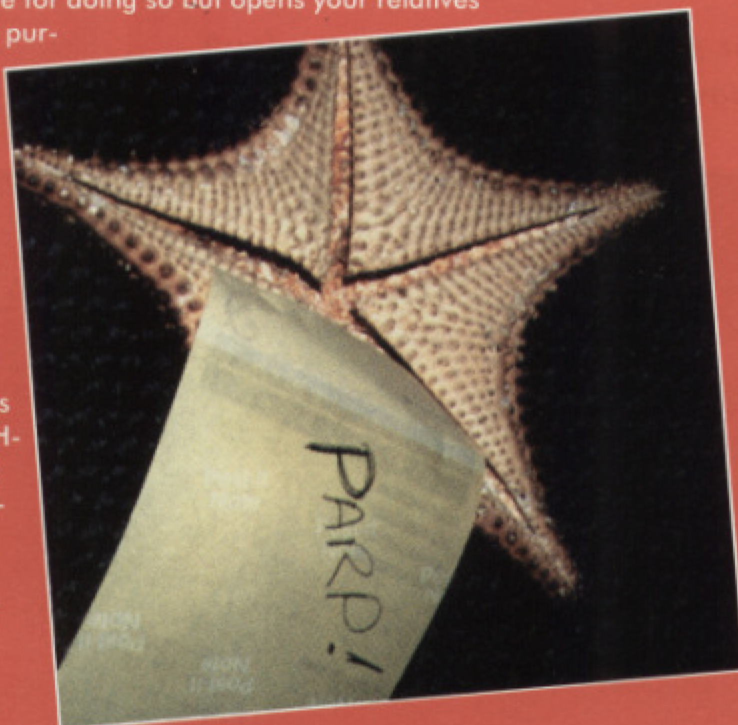
An actor whose career has developed from early work in the RSC, to awards for playing Christ in Zeffirelli's Jesus of Nazareth. Further triumphs included co-starring with Nobel Prize winner for Comedy, Jasper Carrott. So...
It's no surprise to see him snap up the role of (you guessed it) Captain Hook at The Orchard theatre, Dartford.

PS. See if you can 'collect the set' of the ITV Gladiators, by locating their pantos.

RIAL

THANKS FOR NOTHING

We all know what it's like. You're eagerly awaiting your next present-recieving opening, you've made sure everyone knows what you'd like within their price limit and keep little Post-It Note reminders around the house just in case. Then what happens? Tat, that's what. With the season of good will and bad gifts all too near, we thought we'd give you this little opportunity to vent your spleen concerning crap presents you've been given. Just send us a picture (or decent description) of the offending item and we'll take the mickey out of it, which saves you getting into trouble for doing so but opens your relatives eyes to their felonious purchase. The starfish, complete with rancid stench of rotting fish guts, pictured here is your starter for ten, brought back from Florida by Sega Magazine's Tom Guise. Hey Tom – thanks for nothing! Send your nominations to THANKS FOR NOTHING, OLDSTER, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. Thank you.



MAY ALL YOUR PANCAKES TURN OUT LIKE FANNY'S...



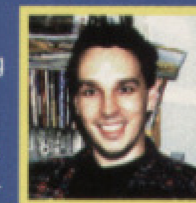
The response to last month's Console Cuisine was phenomenally underwhelming. Unsurprising, as you lot won't do anything without the incentive of a Sega Saturn and a lifetime's supply of software. Anyway, the entries we did get were of an acceptable punny standard to display. This one from James Harris, Rochester:

MORTAL KRUMPETS
JIMMY EGG-WHITE'S WHIRLWIND OMELETTE
HARD BOILED DIZZY
2 ROAD-RASHERS OF BACON
ROBOTNIK'S MEAN BAKED BEANS
TETLEY T.J OR EARL GREY

PEOPLE BITS

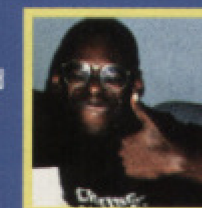
Winter is truly the season of festivities. Following this spirit of goodwill we asked the team to name their favourite seasonal traditions...

STEVE



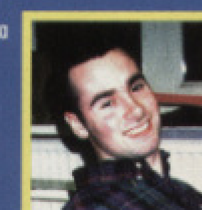
"Gor lumme, you slaaaags!" was Steve's initial response to our probing. Once we'd stopped probing and asked him the question (oh ho ho) he made more sense. "I never miss an opportunity to smoke my mackerel on Fish Smoking Day, when we cockle our mussels alive-alive-o in all manner of traditional East End manors. Manners, rather. And we'd never shoot you wivvaht shaking yer 'and first."
FAVE GAME:MEGA BOMBERMAN

OZ



"Giving flickin' presents to the poor crippled orphans at Christmas is my favourite," says our golden-hearted design chief. "Every year I go round to the local home with a big boxful of Gladiators T-shirts and give them to all the poor little kids. They're always so grateful they start weeping." As indeed would anyone presented with a Gladiators the Comic T-shirt.
FAVE GAME:STAR WARS ARCADE

GUS



"Hoots, watching the Andy Williams Hogmanay Special sandpapers the New Year caber as far as I'm concerned" sparks Gus in a Take The High Road brogue. "Who needs to spend a night out on the town when you've got all the kilt-wearing, haggis-stuffing, head-butting, tight-fisted Auld Lang Syne-ing you could wish for on BBC2? The noo." *factual note. contrary to Rad's inventions, in Scotland the Hogmanay show is shown on BBC1...And ITV...And Channel Four. etc.
FAVE GAME:CANNON FODDER

CLAIRE



Dressing the Chrimble tree puts the blueberries in Claire's seasonal muffin. "I always think they look best in a tasteful flared chiffon catsuit, but if it's cold out I'll pop it in a big furry gorilla coat like mine. But you can't beat that final touch – matching accessories in mocha and Singapore sunset saffron." Regrettably the expense of such decorations means Claire has to dress herself in tinsel and cheap baubles for the next year.
FAVE GAME:PANORAMA COTTON

PAUL



Our query provided a saddening insight into Pauly Paul's festivities. "I really like that time in early January when you exchange all your Christmas presents. First footing, I think they call it. That's when I like to get rid of all the lumps of coal, bits of wood and so on bestowed upon me by my ever-generous relatives. What a fabulous tradition!" If only there were some way of ridding yourself of those Michael York tank-tops other than wearing them out, eh Paul?
FAVE GAME:BEING EVICTED

RAD



Making a welcome return to the team is... oh no sorry, we were thinking of someone else. Anyway, just making a return this month is our old "associate" Rad. Top of his public holiday jollities has to be National Kebab Carnival day, a celebration of Rad's diet. Says he: "I get out my Kebab Magic and make all sorts of kebabs for my pals. Savoury kebabs, jubilee kebabs, kebabs with chocolate sauce, and of course traditional kebabs with lemon juice. Delicious" Strangely Rad always spends Kebab Wednesday alone.
FAVE GAME:DOING SOD ALL

OCEAN'S SATURN INFERNO

- NEW GAME
- BY OCEAN
- SATURN

We hear a lot of interesting stories here at MEAN MACHINES, but one which has particularly wet our appetites is that Ocean are plnning a Saturn version of their eagerly-awaited PC 3D-er, Inferno. Developers DiD are about to go it alone as a separate Ocean label, and are looking to convert Inferno to the majority of CD formats — Saturn included. For those of you with your heads in the sand, Inferno is a stunning-looking space opera using fast-moving polygon-based ships against some of the most detailed backdrops seen in such a game. Movie-like interludes are also used to update the plot, and the game has been receiving rave reviews with the PC mags. Needless to say, the Saturn version will appear here first. Of course.



MYSTY MOUSE

- NEW GAME
- BY SUNSOFT
- SATURN

Last month's news of Myst hitting the Mega-CD has been followed up this month with hot plans for a Saturn conversion. A spectacular 3D rendered fantasy adventure, you play the part of a traveller exploring a world of Jules Vernian proportions and design. Originally a mouse driven game, it's hardly surprising Sega will coincide the launch of the game with the launch of the Saturn mouse. Entitled the Shuttle Mouse, it should retail in this country at around the £15 mark.



▲ *Top tip: Attach this to your Saturn and pretend you have a real computer.*

FIGHTER 2

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- SATURN

While we speak the long-awaited Saturn is hitting the streets of Japan. And first among the titles available for the system is an arcade perfect conversion of Virtua Fighter. But in a shock announcement, Yu Suzuki, head of the fabled AM R&D2 development team, has recently confirmed that work is already starting on the conversion of the hugely impressive Virtua Fighter 2 for the home console. With an expected release date of next summer, the line-up of titles grows more impressive by the week.





▲ *With the first Virtua Fighter only just completed, the sequel's on its way!*

INFOGRAMES ALONE ON SATURN

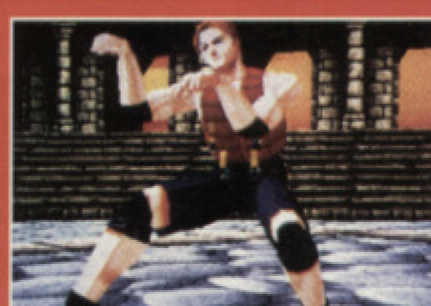
- NEW GAME
- BY INFOGRAMES
- SATURN

We mentioned that Infogrames were converting Alone In The Dark to the Mega-CD. However, now the game is also Saturn-bound! A massive success on the PC , Alone In The Dark is a sprawling arcade/adventure. Controlling a private detective, the player has been summoned to solve a murder mystery before they themselves get bumped off. In addition to some brilliant viewpoints and cinematic presentation, Alone also includes puzzles to keep things fresh. An exclusive WIP is on the cards...

2 SATURN BOUND









BRUTALITY

- NEW GAME
- BY GAMETEK
- 32X

Gametek's bunny-based beat 'em up, Brutal, is currently under going conversion to the 32X under the new moniker of Brutal 2000. Boasting an enhanced character list and more moves (including some rather tasty throws), Brutal 2000 is said to be greatly-enhanced over the disappointing Mega-CD game. In addition to general enhancements, Gametek are also planning to go to town on the game's many backdrops and play areas. A full report when there's something to see.



MARBLE MADNESS

- NEW GAME
- BY TAITO
- SATURN

maze-puzzle game utilising the textured polygon capacities of the 32-bit newcomer. Translating as 'balls' in Japanese, Tama might make you think just that, being the digitised equivalent of a tilting table, where the object is to guide a marble to a marked exit in the fastest possible time, and without coming to various assorted kinds of grief. Loads more features flesh out this skeletal idea, and the game may have the same curious appeal that Taito's earlier 'Cameltry' (the same idea in two dimensions) possessed.





STREET RACER

- NEW GAME
- BY UBISOFT
- 32X

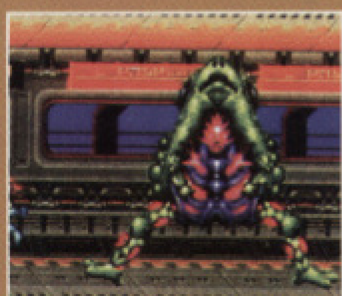
As the exclusive WIP in this issue shows, Harrow-on-the-hill's No.1 coders, Vivid Image, are throwing down the gauntlet with Street Racer on Megadrive, but the team have revealed of plans to start on a 32X version as soon as the Megadrive cart is finished. That should mean a project commencement in the early New Year. The intention is to make each version of Street Racer superior to the last, and Vivid have pinpointed the soccer and rumble sub games as areas for major improvement.

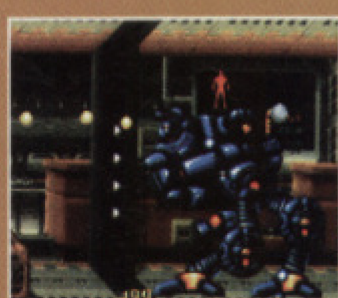


ALIEN SOLDIER

- NEW GAME
- BY TREASURE
- MEGADRIVE

Japan's respected in-house team at Sega, Treasure, have not been resting, on the strength of pictures of their latest projects. Alien Soldier looks like being an impudent reply to Konami's impressive Probotector (rated 94% issue 25), with a similar scrollin' 'n' shootin' look and storyline. Set in the not too distant future of 2010, the shenanigans surround the arrival of the malevolent Skull and Crossgun forces, a series of alien-esque monsters with nothing better to do than enslave peaceful worlds. Cue loads of weapons, huge bosses and the frenetic action Treasure have developed a reputation for.





SHAKE YOUR B

- TV SHOW
- CANADA
- EXCLUSIVE!

MEAN MACHINES has acquired these extraordinary pictures showcasing a new TV show that is storming the states at the moment, and is destined to do the same here in 1995. Oddly titled 'Reboot' each of its 30 minute episodes are set in the heart of a video game world, centred round the futuristic but kitschy city of Mainframe. The show's stars are a group of young digitised dudes and babes, and their devious arch enemy labouring under the imaginative (and frankly naff) moniker of Megabyte. Each episode their animosity spills into game warfare when a game cart is inserted into the world (appearing from the sky in spectacular special effect fashion).

The show is revolutionary in its use of computer animation throughout, of a quality that really does set new standards in the field — even compared with cinematic animation. Pacey and crammed with dazzling effects set-pieces, Reboot has unsurprisingly jumped to the top of the kid's TV charts on the US channels that show it. The good news is that negotiations are under way to bring the show here, and we understand the provisional arrangement is for airing on the ITV network. More news as it comes.



PLUCK A DUCK

- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

Warner Bros' greediest, self-indulgent character, Daffy Duck, is about to appear on the Megadrive courtesy of Sega. Daffy In Hollywood sees our despicable hero out for fame and fortune across a series of platform landscapes. As he progresses, he is attacked by a host of recognisable foes, all of whom reduce his lifespan on contact. Probe are the programming team behind Daffy's latest binary escapade, and we'll furnish you with a review next month. That's all folks.





▲ *Daffy is the quintessential cartoon anti-hero. Wouldn't you say?*

MORTAL MOVIE

- FILM
- BY NEW LINE

Feast your eyes on the first pic to emerge from he new Mortal Kombat movie! Budgeted at $21 million, and directed by Paul 'Shopping' Anderson, the film revolves around the fighting escapes of Liu Kang, Kano and Sonya as they are summoned to Goro's tower to fight for their lives. The producers aim to include as many of the game's characters as possible — including Christopher Lambert as Rayden! — with the backdrops drawing heavily from the arcade game's. Similarly, expect a full-animated Goro for the film's final battle. We'll have a full feature soon, so keep an eye on these pages.



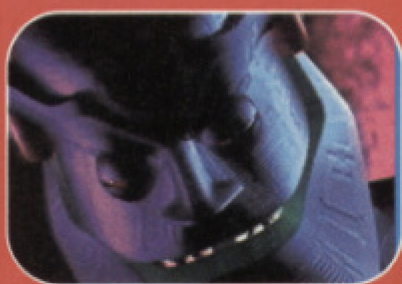
I'M A RISTAR COWBOY

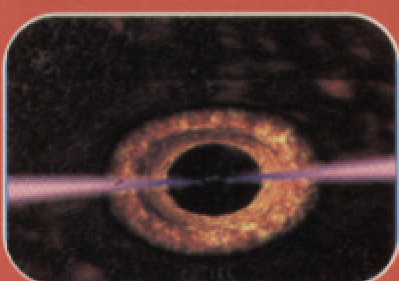
- GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

All hail Sega's new platform marvel — Ristar! Vaguely resembling Sonic, Ristar stars an adaptable little star-shaped hero who's one goal in life is to leg it across his game's multiple scrolling stages. Ristar is a mixture of fast platform action and the bizarrest shoot 'em up imaginable. It has to be said, that the action is very similar to that of Sonic, but even so we reckon it could be one to watch. Especially next month when we'll have more to see.



BOOTY







PERSIAN MUG

- NEW GAME
- BY PSYGNOSIS
- MEGADRIVE

The sequel to last year's Prince of Persia conversion, subtitled 'The Shadow And The Flame' has found its way into Psygnosis' hands, courtesy of their French office, who thought Megadrive owners might like a bit of platform sword-fighting action. Actually, they didn't much care for the original port-over of Jordan Mechner's Mac/PC classic, which went down like Walls' Magnums in Greenland. However, the sequel is much larger and features a greater variety of graphic backgrounds and beautifully-animated fencing moves. Psygnosis are saving this for an 1995 release, with further details yet to be confirmed.

BLINKIN' BONKERS

- TV SHOW
- BY SEGA
- EXCLUSIVE!

The latest addition to the Disney TV fold, Bonkers the clown is Sega-bound. Aimed at the 'younger player', Bonkers is a multi-stage mixture of game styles with Bonkers out to stop people nicking Disney treasures, building a wall by lobbing bricks, and moving boxes around. In all there are five sub-games within the Bonkers framwork, with a smaler platform section acting as an interlude. Bonkers is virtually complete and a review, as they say, is imminent.







WIN! A 32X!

- COMPO
- BY GAMEPLAY

Want to be one of the first people in the country to own a luverly 32X? Of course you do! Well, a new mail order company by the name of Gameplay are offering one of the little mushroom lookalikes to celebrate the opening of their offices in West Yorkshire, and wanted to spread their glee to you, our huge readership. In the next few months, Gameplay will be offering one 32X a month in similar competitions, but for now the impetus is to be the first to get your sticky mitts on the little device. All you have to do to stand a chance of getting one is answer the following question, and send the answer in to the address benath:

Which of the following isn't a 32X game?
A. Star Wars Arcade
B. Beast Ball
C. Doom



There, that wasn;t hard was it! Now send your answer into:

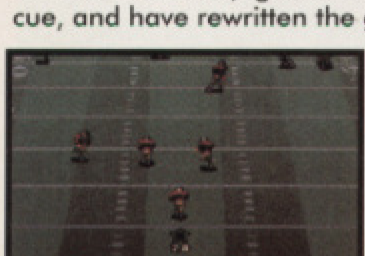
GAMEPLAY MAGIC
32X MUSHROOM
COMPO,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

Make sure your entries reach us by 30th December. Or else.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB RETURNS...

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- MEGADRIVE

After more false starts than the Grand National, Acclaim's NFL Quarterback Club is finally approaching a shop near you. Originally programmed by Park Place, their untimely switch to EA meant they couldn't complete the code, leaving Acclaim in schtuck. However, Iguana have come to the rescue, and have rewritten the game from scratch concentrating on a tactical approach. At present, Quarterback Club is roughly 40% complete, but we'll update you on further progress in our next issue.



SMARTER THAN THE AVERAGE BEAR

- NEW GAME
- BY GAMETEC
- MEGADRIVE

Lock up your picnic hampers as Jellystone's most famous bear is set to star in his all new platforming adventure. With an ecological crisis on the horizon, Yogi has to stomp and romp his way across 20 levels of snow, mines, and forest to mention but a few, warning his forestry pals of the ensuing threat. Luckily help is at hand from Yogi's trusty sidekick Boo-Boo, your host for the bonus 1-up subgames. Expect the full review in the next issue.







WIN! WOLVERINE AND X-MEN GOODIES GALORE!

- COMPO
- BY PANINI

The X-Men are well cool, and what with Acclaim going OTT on Wolverine and Live And Kicking showing the more than respectable cartoons on a Saturday morning, we've teamed up with Panini to give away a host of X-Men gubbins. First off, we've got 400 X-Men sticker albums (each of which comes with 20 packs of stickers) to give away to anyone who gets the following question right:

Which X-Men hero stars in an Acclaim game reviewed this very issue.

Mark your entries X-MEN UNSTUCK COMPO and send it to the usual editorial address.

Extra X-Men goodies come in the form of a selection of X-Men goody bags which are full of assorted figurines, vehicles and the like. We've got 5 goodie bags to give away to the first correct answers we get to this not-exactly-taxing question:

What's the name of the X-Bloke with the exploding playing cards?



RISE AND FALL

- NEW GAME
- BY ACCLAIM
- GAMEGEAR

Never has a game release been in such apparent disarray. Rise of the Robots has had its launch problems, but Time Warner are happy to announce that the Game Gear version will be on the street for the second week in December. Mouth-watering features should include five of the nasty droids from the PC/Megadrive game, and 'cinematic' interludes, which stretch the cart out to a meaty four megs.





▲ *Rise of the Robots. When the music stops the company holding it HAS to release it.*

THOR'S HEARD

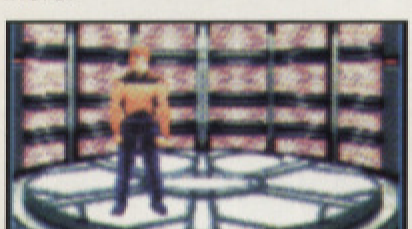
- NEW GAME
- BY SEGA
- MEGADRIVE

Not the very first MEAN MACHINES has brought this particular Norse god to attention. The Story of Thor project appeared earlier this year, but sank without trace. Now the game is back, with a bullish 24MEG backing and is being touted as one of the greatest Megadrive games ever! The chances of having a full review next issue are better than fair, so make sure you get it.

BOLDLY GOING (AGAIN)

- NEW GAME
- SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
- MEGADRIVE

Any handheld owners following the adventures of Jean-Luc Picard and his mates will no doubt be pleased to learn that a Star Trek: The Next Generation game is about to beam down to the Game Gear. The handheld game is basically a cut-down version of Spectrum Holobyte's Megadrive title, with a few of the missions removed and slightly rougher around the edges. However, we're assured it'll be as playable and as deep as the Megdrive game. So there.





GOSSIP

Greetings from undercover central...

Fancy a bit of a laff? Apparently, fading TV celebrity Normski (you know, the one off 'Dance Energy' — who lives just around the corner from EMAP Towers, funnily enough), is touring software companies trying to get them to write a game with him as the star. Virgin have already said no, apparently, but needless to say this hot licence (snigger) will be snapped up imminently. Wicked.

Acclaim's cartoon pairing, Itchy And Scratchy, has run into 'difficulties' apparently, and whilst it will appear eventually, will be radically different from the game we previewed all those months back.

Sega's first Sonic-related caper for the 32X was to have starred his Echidna pal, Knuckles, in a series of rather smart platform-related japes. However, Sega have temporarily shelved the original product for reasons known only to themselves. Don;t despair too much, though, Sonic fans as the spiky blue one is destined to appear for your system imminently. More soon.

It has been a bit quiet on the rumour front to be honest trivia fans, but a little bird did tell us that Sony's plans for a Megadrive version of Elite have been shelved. Again. The project has been on and off more than Bruce Forsythe's wig, but we still reckon it'll see the light of day. Just not until early 1996.

Finally, arcade-goers will be pleased to learn that Sega's Japanese coin-op division have given the green light to Virtua Fighter 3. What more can they do, though? We wait with baited breath...

'Til next month,

Pip pip...

WIN! A MINI-DISC AND LOADS OF SONY GOODIES!

With Christmas just around the corner, Sony are busying themselves by unleashing Mickey Mania, Pitfall, Mega Turrican and Mighty Max on to the unsuspecting Sega-owning fraternity. Thus, with such an impressive line up, it's only right that MEAN MACHINES got in on the action via this rather smart Sony competition.



The first prize is a brand, spanking new Sony Mini-Disc unit which not only allows the user to listen to CD-quality sound, but record on it, too! The MZ-R2 unit we're giving away is fully portable and comes with headphones, remote control, and a host of features including bass Boost, automatic music search, and a rechargable battery — cooool or what!

SONY ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING™

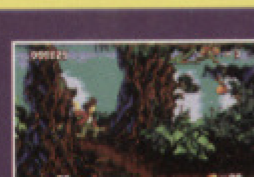
That's not all, though as Sony are also offering five second prizes of copies of Mickey Mania (Megadrive or CD), Pitfall, Mega Turrican and Mighty Max for the next five pulled out the hat, AND five smaller goodie bags full of Sony-related stuff for the runners-up.

All you have to do to win one of these desirable prizes is answer the three questions below and the three we'll run next month. Simple, really. So, without further ado, let's get on with the questions which could see you winning one of the above:

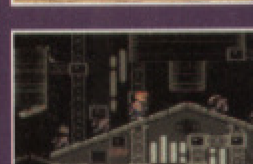
1. Name the acrobatic star of Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure.
   A. Harry
   B. Max
   C. Keith

2. Which famous studio gave birth to Mickey Mouse?
   A. Fox
   B. Columbia
   C. Disney

3. Name Mickey Mouse's trusty pooch
   A. Remus
   B. Pluto
   C. Dougal







Having wracked your brains for the correct answers (ahem), write them down on the back of an envelope or something and keep them safe. The address and final three questions will appear next issue. As will the usual competition rules and conditions.



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Power DRIVE
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"A unique blend of speed and strategy make this a rally game to beat all others. Definitely no stick-in-the-mud!"
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YOU'LL KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME...
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1 PLAYER	
24 MEG	
RELEASE	MARCH
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT ,EM UP

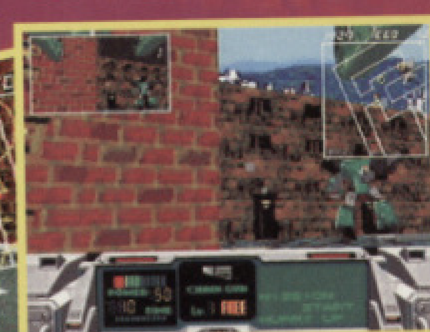
PERCENT COMPLETE

METAL

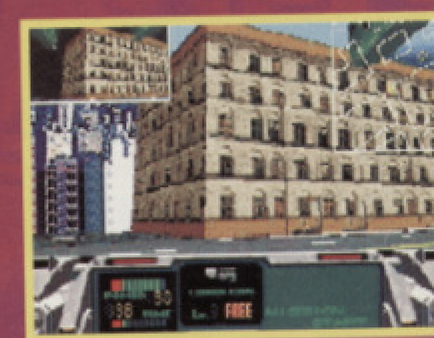
Unveiled at last summer's CES in Chicago as a blocky rolling demo, Metalhead was running on only one of the 32X's SH2 Hitachi/ Sega custom chips. But now prepare to witness the full potential of the 32X's texture-mapping powers in this exclusive preview of the battle of the hardware, Metalhead...

The Japanese certainly have a penchant for city-bound disasters. Just think about the number of times Tokyo has been reduced to rubble in the Godzilla stories, let alone in the movies. To top it all, there always seems to be some enormous robot, originally developed for the benefit of mankind, but now deranged and on the loose. So it's high-time robotkind lent a helping hand when the outbreak of terrorism casts a shadow over future global peace.





▲ Get away from my wall you bloody vandal.



▲ And on your left we have the tenement building from 'New Jack City.'

Using a 3D first-person perspective, Metalhead draws on fellow 32X titles Doom and Virtua Racing Deluxe for inspiration in style and gameplay. The familiar Doom theme of the 3D gaming environment unites with the polygon technology of the Virtua series to create a whole new generation of game.

The action centres on the Metalhead counter-terrorist combat vehicle. A giant robot in form, they are operated by the government forces against the resurgent terrorist forces of the old world philosophy. The rebels have infiltrated the cities of the new Federation and threaten to destroy the veil of peace recently established by a global council. It is left to the Metalhead troopers to seek out the enemy through the deserted streets, and destroy their hardware.

The characters show off the 32X to its full ability, and demonstrate its ability to generate polygons quickly and smoothly! All of the movement is incredibly fluid and in real time. Add on top of this a fully texture mapped city scenario for a battle ground that scales and scrolls flawlessly. Unfortunately it's a case of having to see for yourself the speed and visual effects in motion, to fully appreciate the scale of events. Stay tuned for the complete review in a future issue of MEAN MACHINES.



THE STORY SO FAR...

As the planet drifts silently into the new millennium, the fate of mankind lies in the balance. Minor civil wars have erupted across the face of the planet, throwing social order and stability into disarray. The continental super states, rushed together in fits of local federalist optimism during the closing hours of the old century, now lie shattered, crushed egg shells beneath the boot of nationalist feuds. A ray of hope, however, is grasped by the council of world leaders, who in an unforeseen act of self-preservation, agree once and for all that the planet must unite to survive. A global federation is born. The Federation sweeps through the warring territories with a united and undefeated force, silencing the guns and bullets, quashing the rebellious tendencies. The day comes when the world is one, governed by one immense corporate state. Peace reigns. That is until five years later when sections of the populace become restless and instigate guerrilla attacks on the authorities. Initially the Federation forces are caught off guard and unable to cope with the uprisings. But in retaliation, it is decided by the Select Council to develop a range of mechanised patrol vehicles capable of tackling the outbreaks of resistance: the Metalhead...

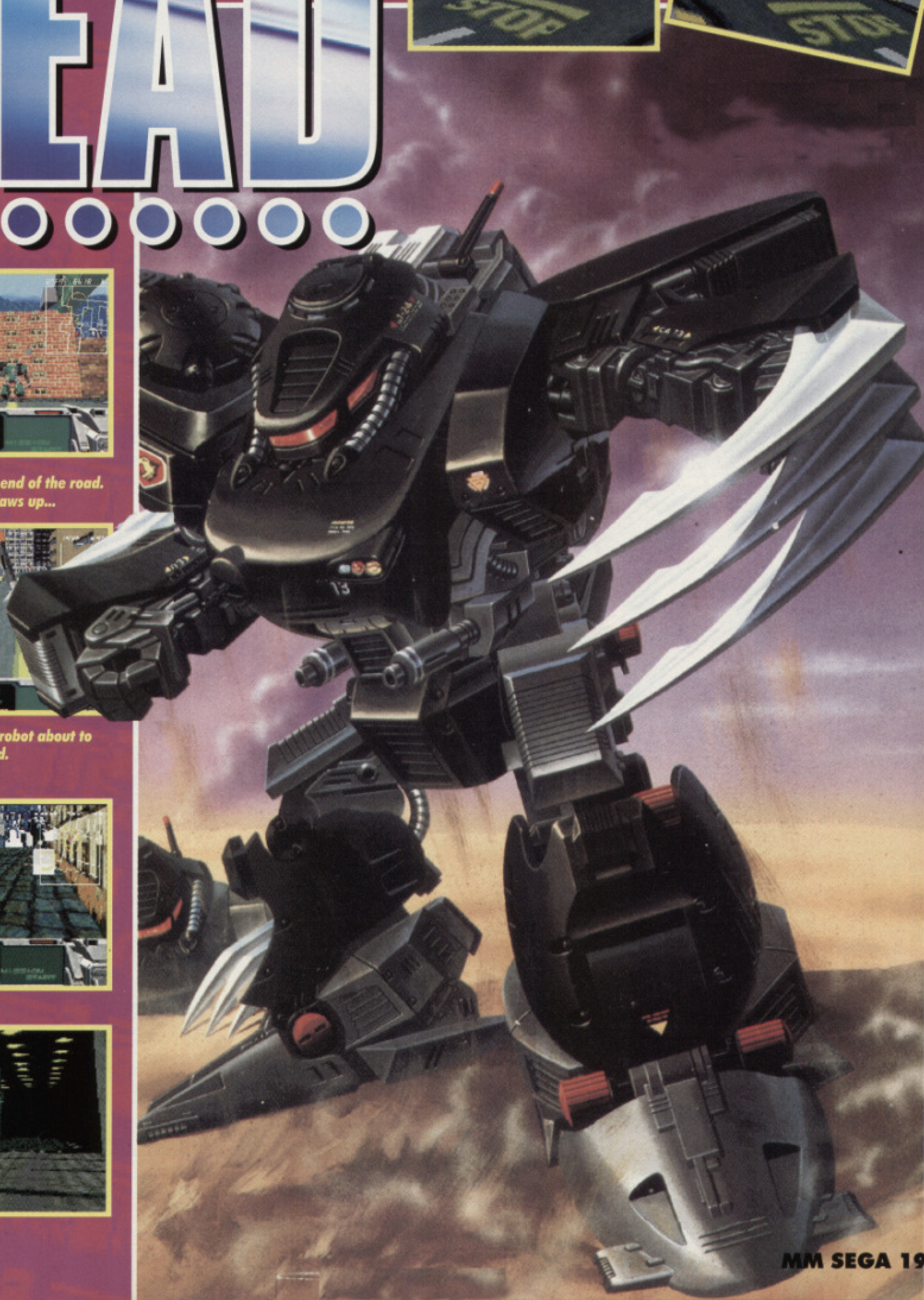


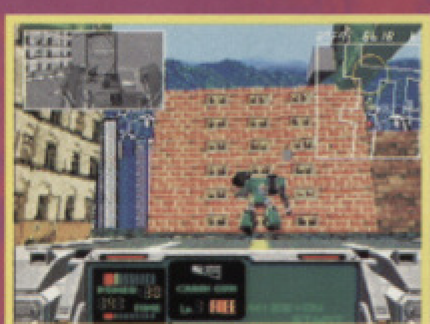


HEAD

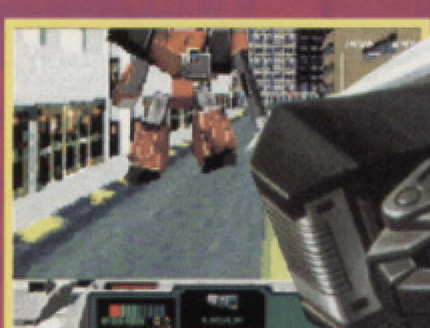






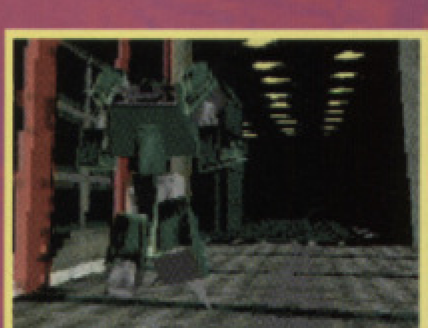


▲ *Ok, Bugsy, it's the end of the road. Come out with your claws up...*



▲ *This view shows a robot about to goose its brown friend.*









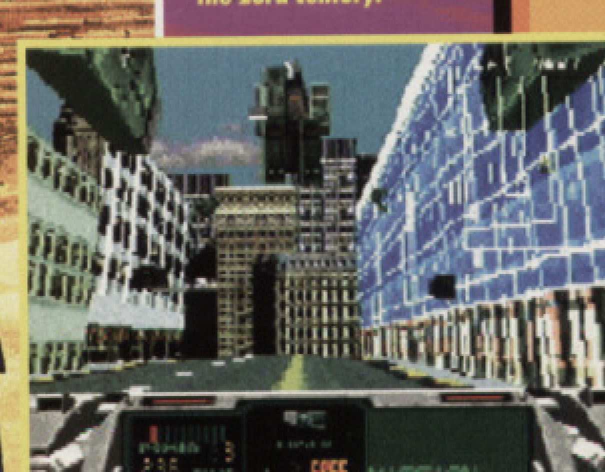
▲ Look at me! Look at me! I'm in Starlight Express!



▲ Sunday afternoon in sunny Farringdon. Even the City Pride is shut.



▲ Robot piggybacks had become very popular by the 23rd century.



▲ You'll never believe who I had in the back of my robot the other day...

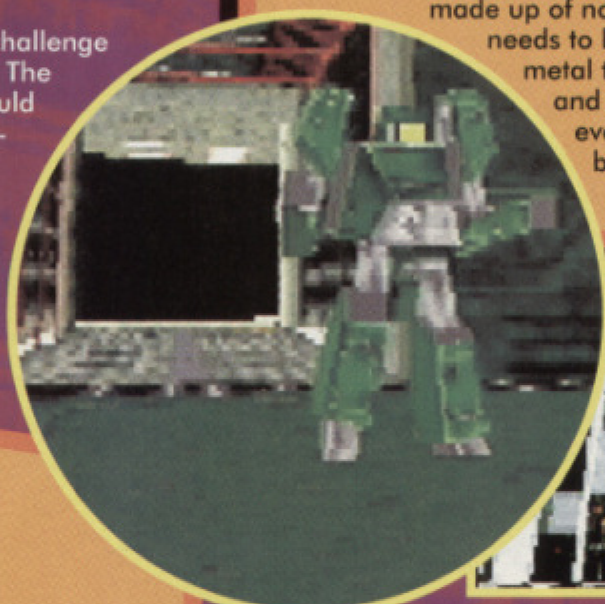


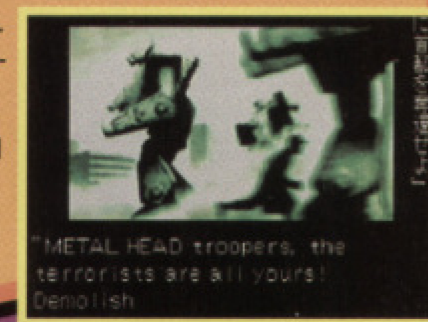
TIME OUT

A significant feature of the game's challenge lies in the devilishly tricky time limit. The resulting effect transforms, what would ordinarily be a hunter destroyer mission, into a high paced scramble to blast every enemy before the timer hits zero. Effectively, once time is up, the pockets of enemy resistance have succeeded in breaking your defences.

MEAN MACHINERY

The enemy forces are comprised of both conventional and robotic machinery of which all must be destroyed to complete the assigned mission. Although more vulnerable to the power of the Metalhead, the conventional jeeps and transporters are supported by an armed back-up of aircraft on bombing sweeps. More of an obstacle than a target, the aircraft cause huge amounts of damage. In terms of recent technology, the terrorists have amassed a sizable catalogue of robotic troopers. The robot targets are made up of non-hostile hardware that needs to be put out of action, and metal troopers of all shapes and sizes some of which are even based on Metalhead blueprints.







▲ *Why do they always base robots on reptiles. Why not a Woodlouse droid?*



▲ *A robot fails to perform his emergency stop. Get the L plates out...*

VIEW TO A KILL

In a similar play option to Virtua Racing, Metalhead has four game views from which to confront the oncoming forces. After the debriefing at the start of every mission, the initial view is from behind the head of the trooper. However at any time during the game, the player has the option to adjust the field of vision to suit their tactical or vehicle control requirements. Apart from the traditional full screen first person perspective, the 'bird's eye' view, taken at a 45 degree away from the Metalhead, gives early warning of the potential threats lying around the next corner, but adds challenge to steering, the control becoming extremely responsive. Whereas the ground level cam, positioned below the feet of the robot, offers a more solid feel through the streets. As the missions progress and the challenge becomes tougher, later levels have the inclusion of a missile cam, use of which allows you to pinpoint the target with greater accuracy.



PEDAL TO THE METAL

Even though constructed of literally hundreds of tons of high tensile armour plating, the Metalhead is surprisingly light on its feet. The control system is your usual business of forward, reverse, left, and right, but with the added option of an accelerator. A function that will come is particularly handy when tracking and chasing runaway enemy operatives.

TIME
With time so tight keep a close eye on this.



MAP AND RADAR
The arrow indicates direction faced as the map rotates around you. Yellow blips mark the enemy positions.

WEAPONRY WINDOW
Status on current hardware in operation. The words 'free' imply an unlimited source of ammo.

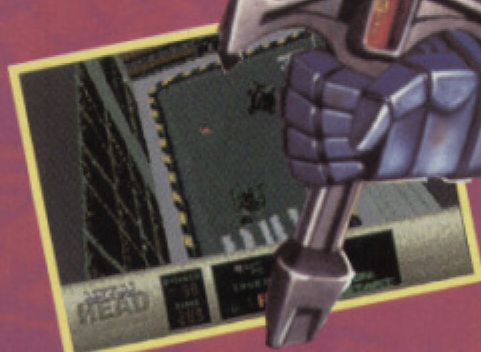
MISSION SCREEN
Details of status and warnings of the time limit expiring.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Before launching into action, mission objectives are transmitted from the Federation council members. Informing the player of the situation and status of the enemy forces, they also outline specific threats from unencountered weaponry. At the completion of a level, these are the same guys who will upgrade your armoury.



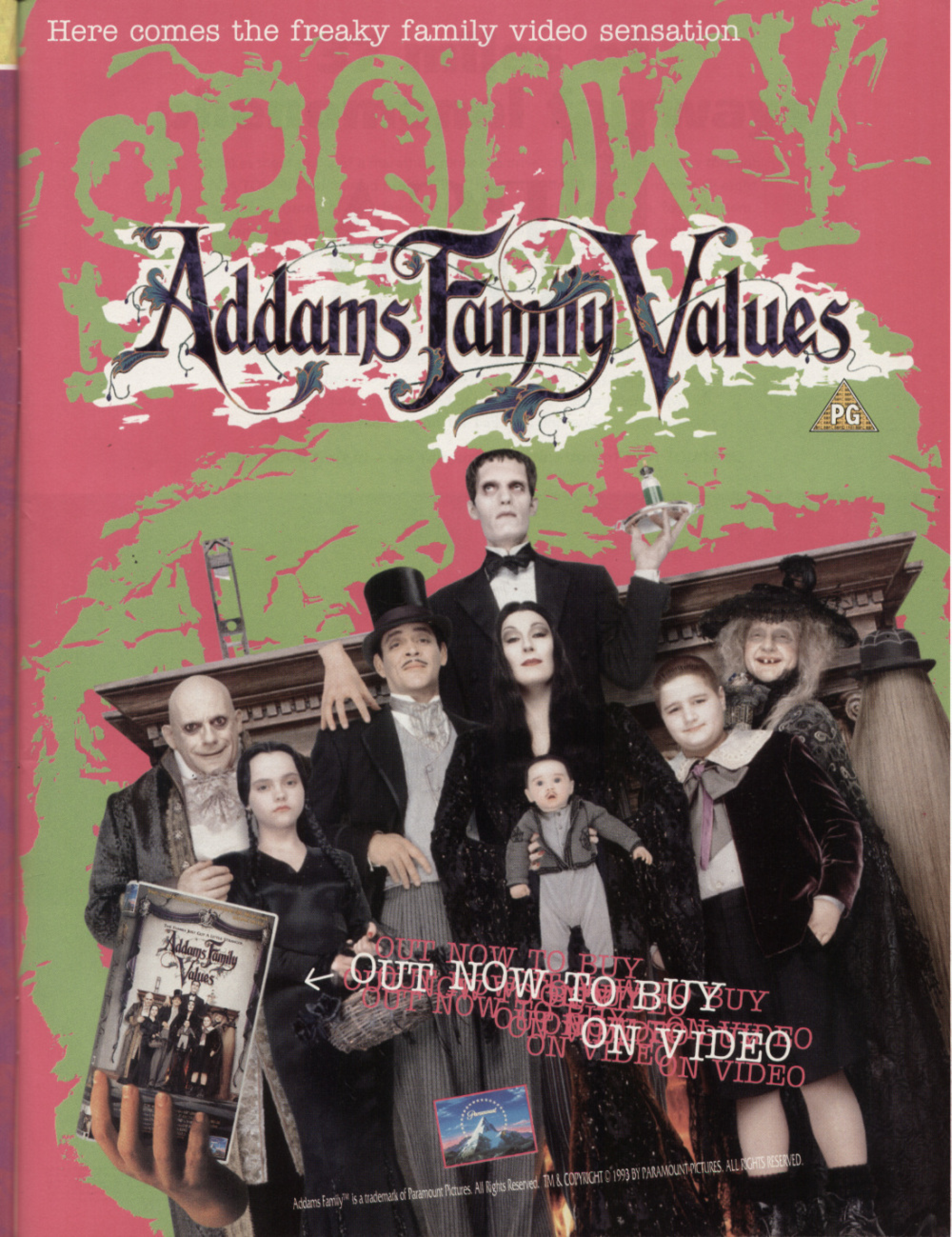
▲ *The real reason Buddy Holly and Richie Valens crashed.*

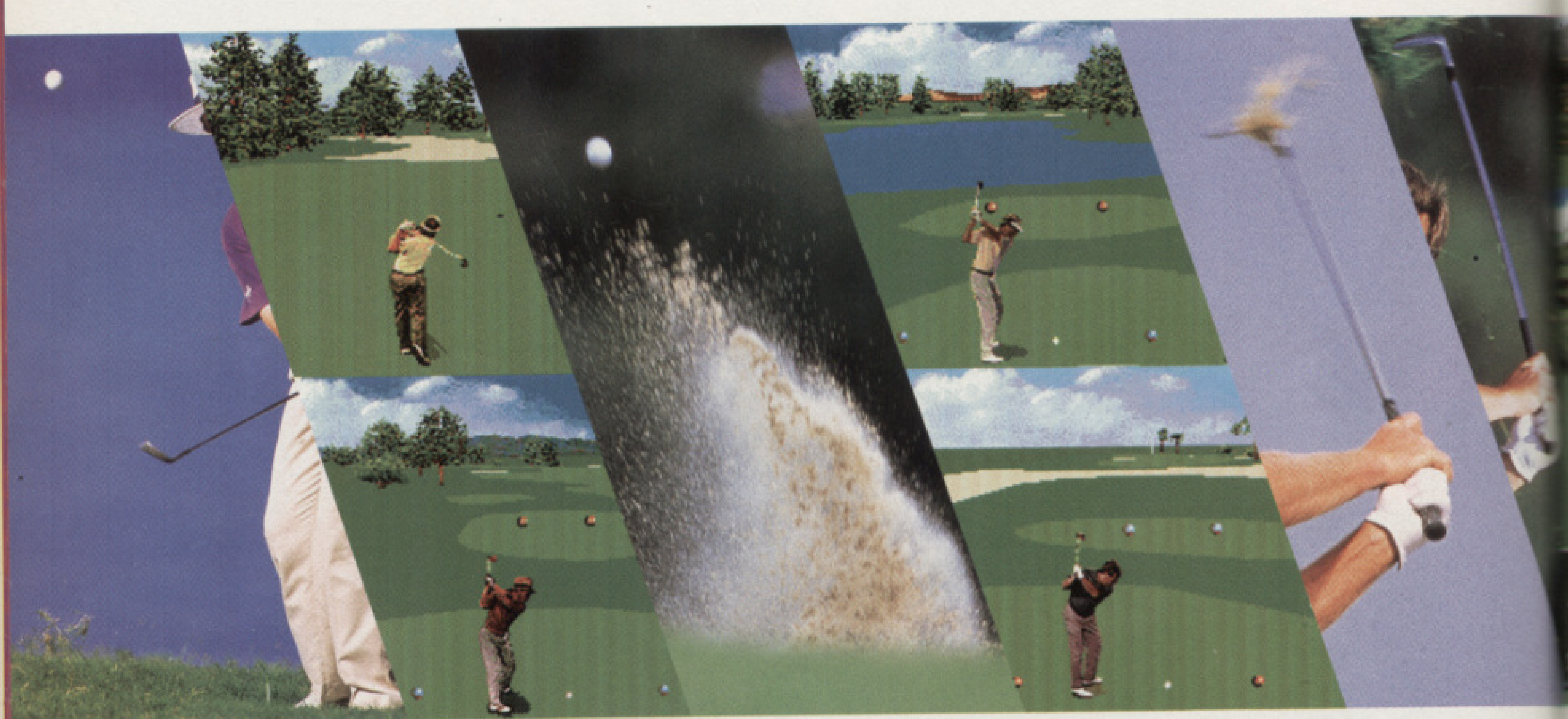




FULL METAL JACKET

The on-board weapons control is based around four primary functions. Located on the hydraulic arms of the Metalhead and operating independently of one another, the weapons are selectable on request, and upgradable with the successful completion of missions. Your main line of attack when confronted with rogue Metalheads and enemy troop carriers comes from the inexhaustible supply of ammo for the wide beam laser cannon, or the chain gun operational in later missions. On the rationed side of weaponry, the pilot has the option of either homing missiles — locked — on to the target and released into the offending machinery — or the mine launcher — rocket-powered land mines projected at ground level into the path of on-coming vehicles.


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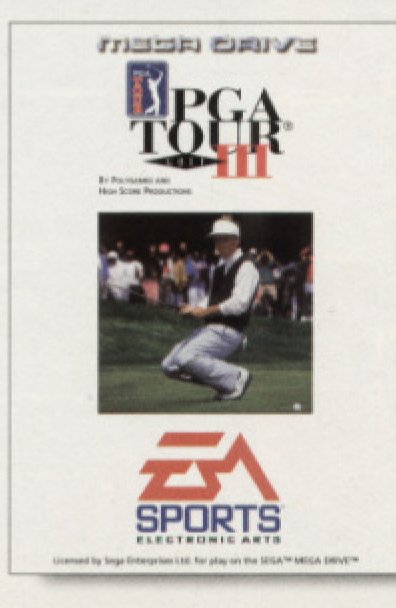
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if it's in the GAME, it's in the GAME™

EA SPORTS™ ELECTRONIC ARTS

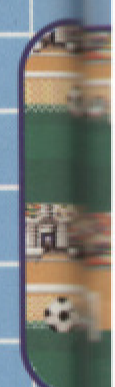
WORK IN PROGRESS

STREET RACER



As the old song goes: 'anything you can do I can do better...', and this sums up the one-upmanship between the Nintendo and Sega machines perfectly. Whilst Super NES owners marvel over FX Trax, we enjoyed Virtua Racing months ago. And whilst Zelda was once hailed as the benchmark RPG by which all others are judged, Sega hit back with the magnificent Soleil. In fact, the Megadrive and Super NES are pretty much evenly matched — but the Nintendo machine has one small advantage: a small plumber and his go-karting antics. Yup, the Megadrive has no answer to the thrills and spills of Mario Kart, and as the Brooklyn Plumber stands as much chance of making it to the Megadrive as Craig Charles does returning for a seventh series of Red Dwarf, it has fallen to UBI Soft to rise to even the odds.





Teaming up with veteran developers Vivid Image (the guys behind The Second Samurai), UBI Soft wanted a game which not only tackled Mario Kart head on but improved on it. Street Racer is the result of the following year's work, and the Super NES version has been acclaimed as a one of the best Mode 7 racers available. But for the imminent Megadrive version Vivid have had their hands tied as the Sega system doesn't have scaling facilities. Or does it? I think we'd better take a look under the Megadrive version's bonnet...

PROJECT
STREET RACER

PUBLISHER
UBI SOFT

INITIATED
MARCH '94

RELEASE
APRIL '95

FORMAT
MEGADRIVE 32X

DEVELOPERS
VIVID IMAGE

A TRIP THROUGH CUSTOMS

Vivid Image were keen to show the wealth of options that flesh out Street Racer, with the intent of making it a fully customisable game. What's the point, they muse, of creating a sophisticated game engine without allowing the player to fully access it. The result is a crammed options screen enabling you to set tournaments exactly as you want them; handicap racers to allow players of uneven abilities to battle each other on an even playing field and set up the racing field as you want it. Many of the options aren't complex to program or memory intensive, but they require that rare commodity — thought on behalf of the programmer. They've also taken pains to prevent the options becoming a barrier to playing the game. It's easy to exit the selection screens and play a perfectly satisfying default game.

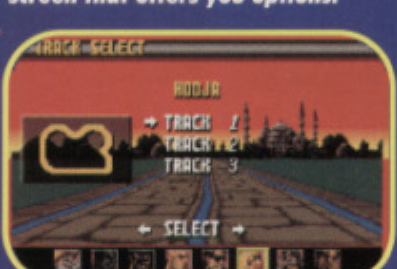








▲ *That rare thing - an options screen that offers you options.*



▲ *Track select is another mrthod of customising your races.*





THE WHEELIE WILD SHOW

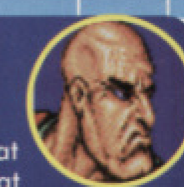
Eight racers are on offer, each with differing skills. Vivid have given each of the entrants five attributes — acceleration, speed, handling, attack, and defence — and these are marked out of ten. Similarly, each of the racers has been given a home circuit where they reign supreme. Which leads us rather nicely to the guys themselves:

HODJA NASREDDIN



The oldest entrant (4003 no less), and hailing from mystical depths of Turkey. His chosen mode of transport is a magic carpet which is a litle slow but great for cornering. His special moves are a force shield and a dagger slash.

BIFF



You know those big scowling blokes with shaved heads you always avoid eye contact with? Biff's mates. Armed with a baseball bat and driving a 4WD beach buggy he's most at home touring a simple circular track .

SUZULU



A Zulu warrior, his car is made up of sticks and rocks. Not stereotypical at all. However, the vehicle is also covered with rhino skin to toughen it up and enhance his charge attacks. If all fails he can use a little voodoo as he drives.

RAPHAEL



A hunky, rich Italian with a suitab;ly expensive car and weapons including a gold chain and an expensive stereo(!). Raph's humble abode is a sprawling countryside track with more twists than a room full of Agatha Christies.

FRANK



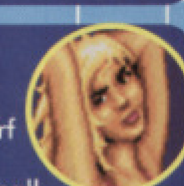
A youthful 100 years-old, Frank is Street Racer's equivalent to Kong and Bowzer — strong and solid. His Cadillac lookalike is fast to accelrate, but his heaviness means he's not that fast. His home territory is a graveyard.

SUMO SAN



A sumo warrior from the future, San controls a car of fancy futuristic gadget. His vehicle is armed with water and electric weapons, and he can administer a nasty slap himself! A futuristic city form this guy's home track.

SURF SISTER



Looking almost identical to ex page 3 stunna, Gayle Tuesd... sorry, Suzanne Mizzi, Surf Sister is a girl who excels in every department (titter). Her rather nifty car has beachball tyres, and her home turf is Bondi. Quelle surprise!

HELMUT VON POINTENEGGER



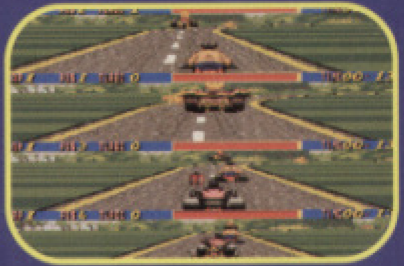
An ex WWI pilot, with a car to reflect his love of the air. His car is moderately fast, but the heavy wings make it tip easily. His weapons include a pair of deadly side saws, and needless to say, his home is a disused airfield.

AN ORGY OF FUN

The singlemost arresting feature of Street Racer is the four-player mode. Just how the hell is that achievable on the Megadrive? Vivid Image come over all modest when explaining the intricacies. "Actually, I set that part up in a night", recalls programmer Harris Bernandez. "I just told him to go for it," says Mev. Harris grins: "I was hoping he wouldn't ask me to". But like Bullfrog's Theme Park explorations have proved, the Megadrive possesses a fair amount of power. There's no loss of speed with the screen split four ways. Harris worked on the principle of having the computer run the background at full speed when all four cars are on screen and in the foreground (ie at their largest sprite size). With this scenario achieved, anything else can be handled by the CPU.



▲ *The player select doubles as a demo of the characters.*







▲ *The water even moves in convincing wave motion.*





▲ *When Sega saw the textured track they went ape!*











▲ *The highly detailed car sprites take shape.*

LOOK NO WIRES!

"We want people to see this game is real — there's no cheating on our part", claims Mev Dinc. He has a contempt for racing games that play tricks like positioning a computer car constantly behind the player waiting for a slip up. In Street Racer, the computer cars are controlled by sophisticated AI routines that make them WANT to win, and the game also has a 'monitoring system' to ensure its enjoyable for all players. Computer care are independent and fight amongst themselves, and the computer won't let you either romp into an unassailable lead or let the rest of the field open up an uncloseable gap. The CPU senses your performance and makes changes to the other cars to maintain the excitement: "There's nothing worse than playing a racing game and circuiting the entire track on your own", contends Mev.

The proof of the pudding comes with the remarkable replay mode, yet another console first. After the race is finished it is possible to watch it again, and not only that, but from various angles and from any of the racers. Constant switching is possible, so you first view yourself gaining on the leader from behind, then switch to see the pack dwindling in the distance. There's scope for approaching or retreating from the viewed player in this mode. But the crowning glory is the implementation of the replay mode in the multi-player game. Up to four players can view the race independently, making their own viewing choices. "This just wasn't possible on the SNES," confirms Mev, "and another element which makes this the superior version of Street Racer".

OFF THE TRACK

Let's not forget to mention the two bonus games. (Well, there are others but I promised to keep them a secret). Soccer and Rumble utilise the nifty scaling engine, but this time for goal scoring and wrestling purposes. Soccer is complete, and highly playable. Yet again the Megadrive is able to handle in full four-player mode what the SNES was limited to two. There's even a choice of pitch surfaces and three playing speeds. The rumble game, where up to four players try and push each other out of an arena has still to be completed, but either game can be played with any number of the eight characters.





▲ *Goal tallies that would make Ossie weep.*


PITFALL
THE MAYAN ADVENTURE
NOT EVERYBODY WINS.
SONY
ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING
ACTIVISION
SEGA POWER - 91%
"WHAT INDIANA JONES SHOULD HAVE BEEN."
SUPER GAMER - 90%
MEGA-CD • SNES • MEGA DRIVE
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PLAYERS	1
RELEASE	DECEMBER
BY	ACCLAIM
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP
PERCENT COMPLETE	



STA

As man ventures ever further into space, his thirst for knowledge will expand accordingly. Not content with scouring beneath the Earth's surface for details of our history, countless other worlds will be at our disposal — though not all of them friendly. This is the basis for Stargate, a fast-paced action movie starring Kurt Russell, and the latest licence to be acquired by the busy chaps at Acclaim.



Set a few years into the future, a team of archaeologists have stumbled across a collection of Egyptian artifacts covered in strange hieroglyphics. The leader of the team, Daniel Jackson (played by James Spader), sets to deciphering the coded messages and unwittingly finds details of a portal to another dimension. No sooner has he opened the 'Stargate', though then his team are picked off one by one by a strange alien race resembling Egyptian gods. It transpires the strange beasts have emerged from the hole in time, so enter Kurt Russell as Colonel Jack O'Neil and his merry band of US marines to get to the bottom of things.



Passing through the gate into the other dimension O'Neil and his band of archaeologists and troops find themselves in a world inhabited by a mix of aliens and humans stolen from the time of the Pharaohs. Needless to say, they aren't given a warm welcome and stumble across a plan to invade Earth — something O'Neil has a big problem with. Thus, as the game mirrors the film, O'Neil must take on the aliens in a fight for the Earth's future...





CAN YOU HORUS, MOTHER?

At first sight, Stargate looks rather similar to Acclaim's earlier licence, Alien 3. The core of the game is set around an O'Neil sprite who runs around a series of eight-way-scrolling landscapes picking off alien baddies with a variety of weapons. However, any similarities end there. Following the plot of the film extremely closely, O'Neil begins the game in the Egyptian desert where the artifacts have been discovered, and where Jackson, the archaeologist awaits at the end. From there, the game's scrolling levels expand as O'Neil is given a series of objectives which eventually lead him into the other world and a confrontation with the leader of the aliens, King Ra. In all, Stargate spans six levels, each of which is made up of a dozen smaller stages, with a ho[st] of the strange animatronic creatures from the film popping up as cannon fodder or transpo[rt]



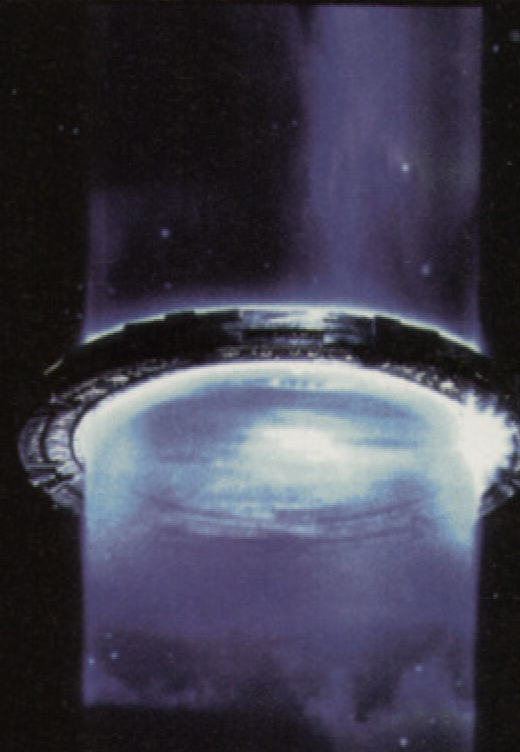
JACK OF ALL TRADES



Separating Stargate from the dozens of platform blasters available is a tactical angle which adds a puzzle element to the proceedings. The first example of this is when O'Neil is sent by Jackson to locate and retrieve a radio the party have somehow lost on route. During later stages of the game these involve opening the portal and collecting the objects needed to bring Ra's rule to an end. The main aim, though, is to collect the pieces needed to open the Stargate in the first place, before activating a nuclear device to blow Ra into bite-sized pieces to prevent his invasion.



In addition to the platform stages, the development team at Probe have tried to add as much variety as possible to the action, and this includes white-knuckle mine cart rides and one of the most agile sprites seen in a video game — including rope-swinging, multi-directional firing and grenade-lobbing capabilities.



ARGATE











BEHIND THE SCENES

Coding the game are the ever busy Croydon lads at Probe. Fresh from his work on Pagemaster, Stargate is being overseen by development manager Tony Beckwith with a team of six working on the graphics, coding and sound effects. Work on the game began over six months ago, and their basic aim was to create a game which not only followed the plot of the film as closely as possible, but also went one step further than the usual platform tie-ins. Thus, whilst the player is busy fending off alien attacks, they must also get to grips with communicating via O'Neil's radio or splitting the party up for separate missions.



KNOW THINE ENEMY

The bulk of the enemy sprites in Stargate are made up of Ra's personal guards. Initially, the player is left to fend off overlarge beetles and flying pests, but after a while Ra's guard get wind of your progress and step out to stop you. Answering to the name of the 'Order of Horus' these highly-trained guards are instantly recognisable by their hawk masks and the gliders they fly — and they're tough beggars, too, requiring several hits before they keel over. Leader of the Order of Horus is Ra's champion Anubis — a powerful warrior with a dog-shaped head.





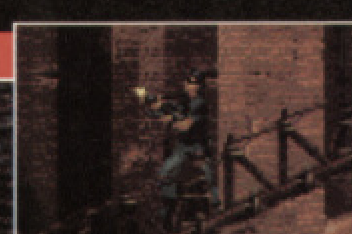


▲ *Cave fans should watch out for the fab 'cave' bits — which are underground!*





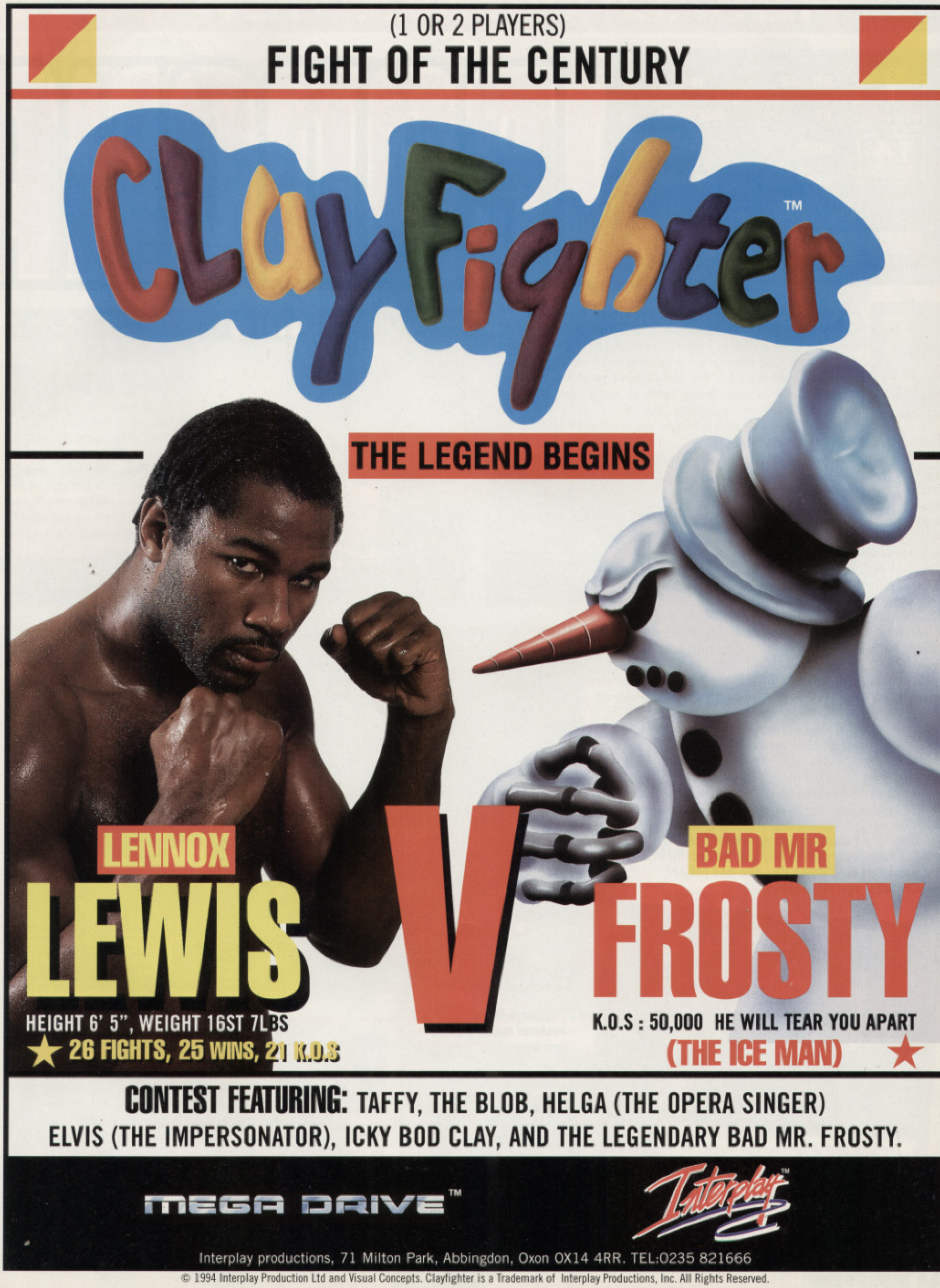






▲ *Camp theatre fans should enjoy the cape wearing levels. This one is actually a digitsed pic of Kenneth Branagh* *this is a complete lie.*




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PLAYERS	1
MEG	16
RELEASE	TBA
BY	MARUBENI
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP

PERCENT COMPLETE

PANORA



Over the last few years, the Japanese have lost interest in the Megadrive in a big way. While the machine thrived here, sales dropped off in its native land. There has also been a corresponding drop in Japanese software for the Megadrive seen here. The big games from Sega have been coming from the States, or, more increasingly, Europe.

It's a shame in many ways, as Japanese games often have a bizarre character and flavour that you never get from, say, an oh-so-serious British platformer. Where we have helicopters, they use broomsticks. Sunsoft's Panorama Cotton is a perfect example, and it would be nice if Marubeni, prospective distributors in the UK, were able to give us back a little of that East Asian gaming perspective.





The title describes a feisty little madam called Cotton, who partakes of assorted magical adventures in a cutesy fantasy land. The 'Panorama' refers to the eye-catching nature of the graphics — everything is shown in fast-moving sprite-rendered 3D.

The closest equivalents are the old Sega stalwarts Afterburner and Space Harrier, but Panorama seems to outperform their sprite-spewing abilities, with an alarming number of things fleeing out of the screen at one time, and three different speed settings. Their are tactical elements, and further goals like experience points, but Panorama smacks of being a good old fashioned trigger fest. Everything bar the backdrop can cop it. It's made us feel quite like the old MEAN MACHINES again. Marlon.



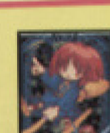
▲ *Victoria Wood's husband makes a guest appearance.*



▲ *Everything stops for tea time on Cotton.*



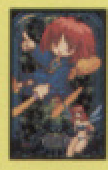
100% COTTON



Panorama may be a headlong rush for the most part, but many of the levels offer you a choice of routes. Arrows alert you to an oncoming choice, and positioning Cotton near the gap is all you need do. Every pathway has its own selection of targets and hazards, and it's quickly apparent that some are harder than others.

MA COTTON





COULD IT BE MAGIC?

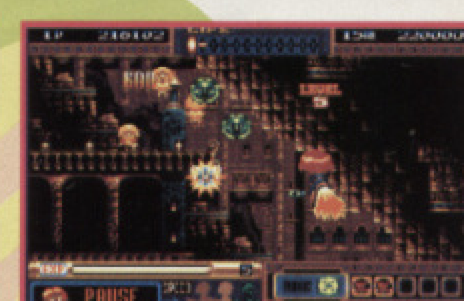
Magical scrolls float about the ether waiting to be picked up, and are used to boost Cotton's power over a short period. The magic is colour-coded, to mark different effects, and cool marksmanship can turn tokens to the colours you want. Cotton also has the assistance of a fairy helper, though things get so frantic, it's hard to see just what she does except squeal.

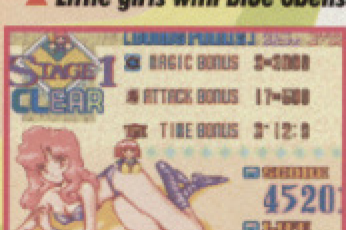




▲ *Little girls with blue obelisks on their head — it's Japanese!*

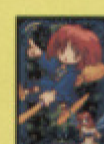












TURNING JAPANESE

So what makes a 'Japanese' style game? First of all, everything is super cute, even the baddies — and especially the heroine — who has large, babyish eyes and is usually scantily clad. The music sounds sort of cheesy but carries on relentlessly. Backdrops and sprite graphics are often garish and crudely drawn, but psychedelic and changing frequently, Jap games are either hideously complicated (they love RPGs) or ultra-simple, like Cotton.





1 PLAYERS	RELEASE	DECEMBER
32X	BY	SEGA
	PRICE	TBA
	GAME TYPE	SHOOT EM UP

PERCENT COMPLETE

AFTER BURNER

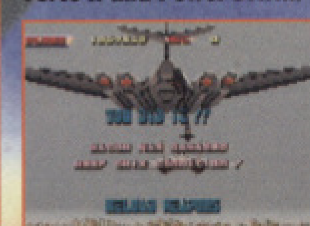
With the advent of the 32X, Sega are taking the chance of using the updated technology to bring us up to date on a few old faves. There's a preview of Space Harrier in about four page's time, but first feast your minces on their forthcoming conversion of their classic Afterburner coin-op. In 1990, Afterburner was THE coin-op to be seen playing, and the realism of tearing across a series of detailed 3D backdrops whilst picking off enemy jets with your bullets and missiles was way before its time — it was so popular, even John Connor was playing it in Terminator II!

The 32X game is identical in every respect to the original coin-op, and sees the player steering a well-armed Tomcat through wave after wave of oncoming baddies. The actual idea behind the game is simplicity itself — just shoot anything that gets in your way — but the frenetic pace is as exciting as it ever was. In between these bouts of blasting, extra weapons can be picked up from a handy passing carrier, whilst landing at a well-placed airstrip gives the player a chance to tot up the number of kills they've made. Super Afterburner is now virtually complete, with Sega currently deciding when to release it. As soon as they do, needless to say we'll review it.

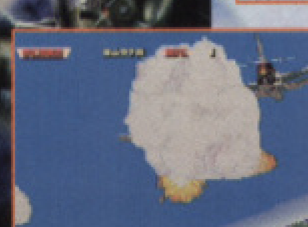





▲ All that we await now are conversions of Galaxy Force II and Power Drift...









Cadillacs Dinosaurs

1 PLAYERS	
RELEASE	JANUARY
BY	ROBOT SCIENCE
PRICE	£49.99
GAME TYPE	SHOOT EM UP
PERCENT COMPLETE	



Fiesty CD game developers Rocket Science have picked up cult comic Cadillacs and Dinosaurs as their second Mega-CD release, once again aiming to redefine Interactive Movies on the format. The comic series, created in the States by Mark Shultz may not be familiar to to those who don't frequent Forbidden Planet or a local graphic novel emporium, but it mixes prehistoric monsters, classic 50's automobiles and derring-do in a bizarre and distinctive fashion.

Following the adventures of Jack 'Cadillac' Tenrec and travelling companion Hannah Dundee, both game and comics are set in the Xenoxoic age, some 600 years in the future. This era of 'strange life' has been brought about by a geological cataclysm, civilisation has disintegrated, and the previous ages of machines and technology is a distant memory. In the meantime terrifying dinosaurs have come to roam the Earth again. Under names like 'cutter' and 'shivat' society copes with the daily threat of ending up as a reptilian breakfast.

Tenrec is revered as one of 'Old Blood' mechanics, who know the way of machines, and he cuts an impressive figure in his '53 red cadillac, which often speeds him out of tricky Jurassic confrontations. The game is pretty true to the kitschy, dynamic artwork of the stories which has a Fifties sci-fi feel, though only first appeared some four years back in 'Xenozoic Tales', a compendium of which Cadillacs and Dinosaurs proved the most popular part. Ten levels of reaction-testing gameplay, set in dinosaur infested jungles, involve shooting and steaming through the eponymous creatures, handling mutant poachers and basically staying in one piece.

Much of the game is played in what Rocket Science claim to be a unique 2 1/2-D 'into the screen' environment quite different to anything seen on the Mega-CD. These demo shots certainly indicate skimpy costumes, sharp teeth and the odd fright. Next month we should be able to tie it all together in a review.











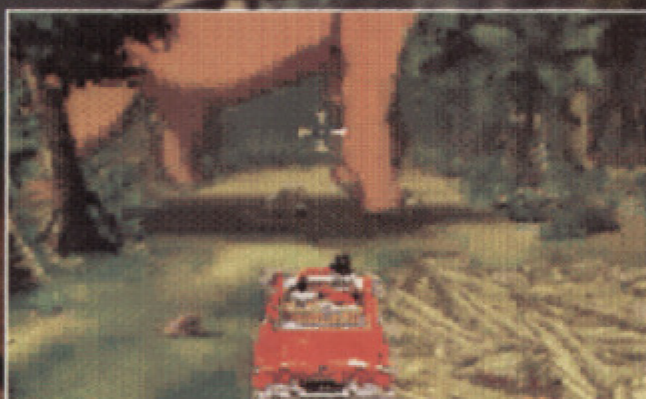


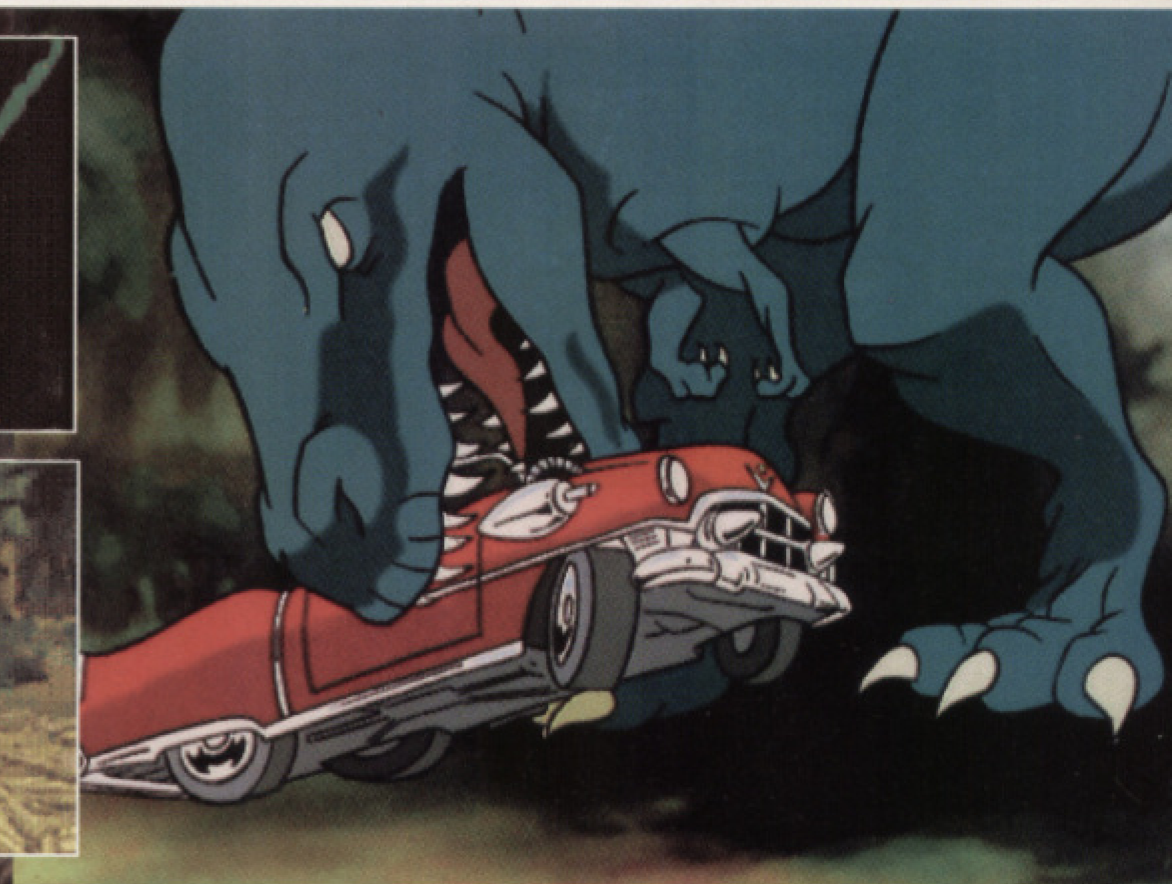


▲ *Could you pass the Ms Matey, please?*







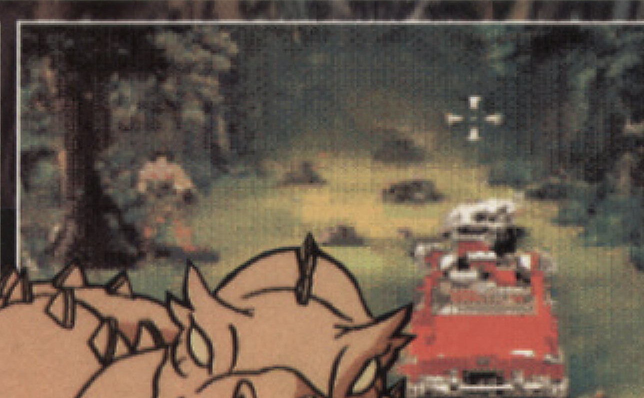


ROCKET SCIENTISTS

And just who are these upstarts making huge claims for both the design and technology of their first CD products? Rocket Science are less than a year old, but their co-founders flout impressive credentials. Peter Barrett, Vice President of the fledgling company, is noted for creating Cinepak, the compression technique that allows the Mega-CD to show Full Motion Video. Naturally it plays a major part in Rocket Science titles. The programmers claim they can transport a game from format to format (eg Mega-CD to PC CD-ROM) in just over a month, using standard FMV technology. The designer of Cadillacs is David Fox, ex-Lucasfilm employee who can list impressive credits like 'Rescue on Fractulus' on his CV. Rocket Science also employs the talents of Hollywood screenwriters like Ron Cobb (credits include Raiders of the Lost Ark, The Abyss), to handle the large amount of dialogue and film-sized ($1m) production budgets for their games. Big business has made a significant investment for future projects.









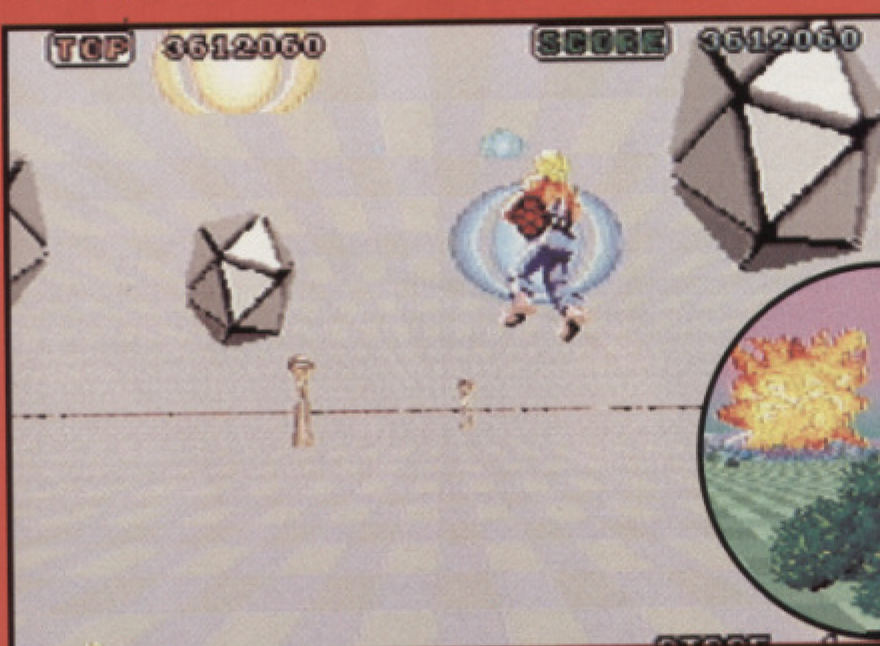
PLAYERS	1
	32X
RELEASE	DECEMBER
BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT EM UP
PERCENT COMPLETE	

SPACE HARRIER



Before Sega got into polygons and the Virtua series, they were well into creating sprite-based games which rocked more than 200 smellies at an Aerosmith concert. Galaxy Force II, Power Drift, and G-Loc all broke new ground by combining large sprites and fast action with hydraulically-moved machines which tossed you about like so much salad — but the Grandaddy of them all, and the latest game announced for the 32X, was Sega's legendary Space Harrier.

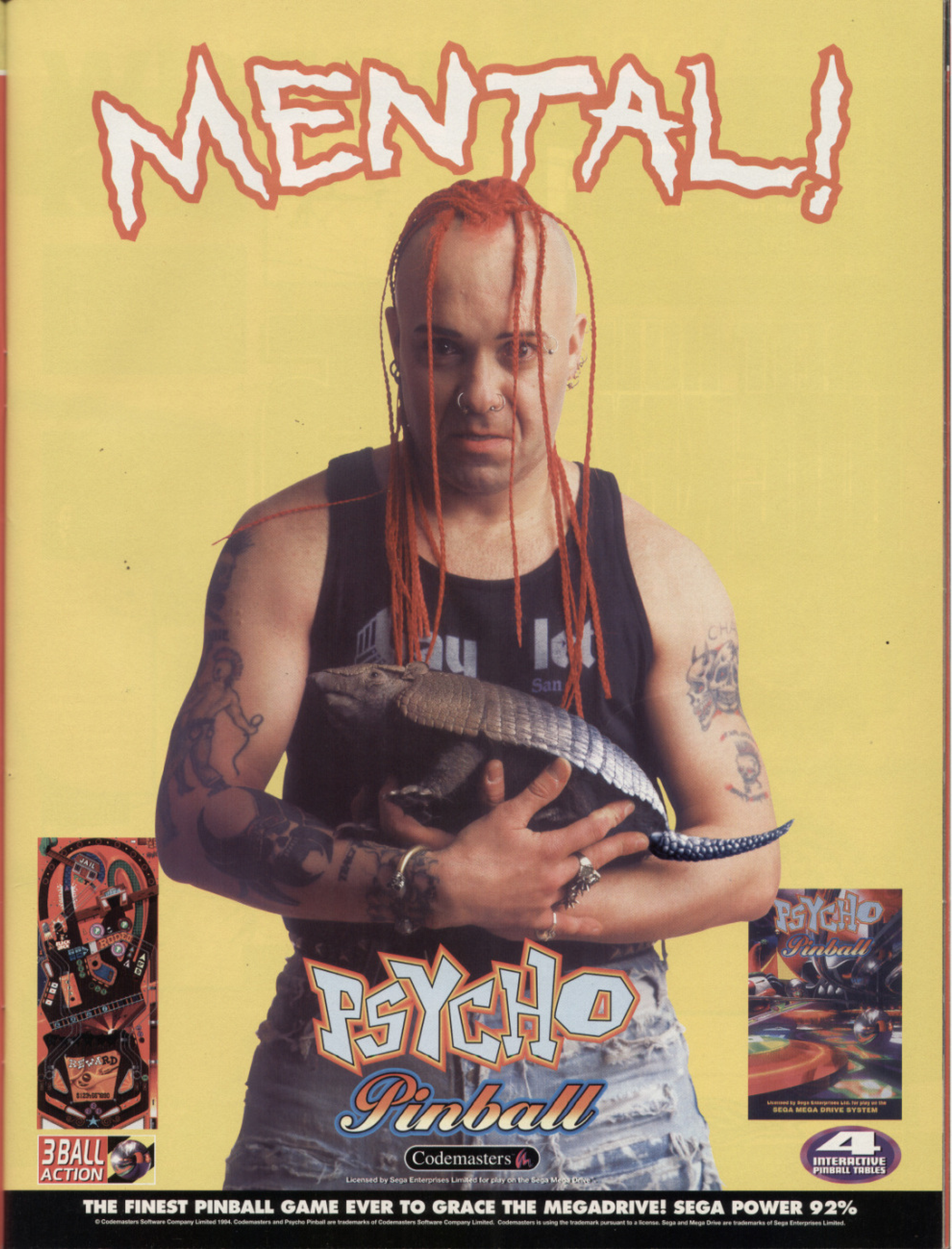
Released back in 1984, Space Harrier was never going to win any awards for plot or originality. A bunch of stone heads (bringing us rather nicely back to those aforementioned smellies) and their pet dragons have invaded a once-lush planet but, instead of sending in a space armada to clear them out, a lone hero with a bazooka has been left to evict the alien menace. As such, wave after wave of fast-moving 3D landscape and alien formations stand between the player and a confrontation with the level boss. And because this is the 32X, it looks identical to its arcade parent...







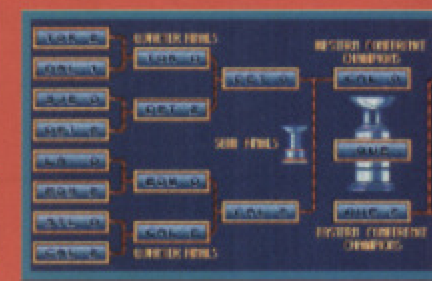



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1-2 PLAYER	
16 MEG	
RELEASE	SPRING '95
BY	ACCOLADE
PRICE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SPORT
PERCENT COMPLETE	

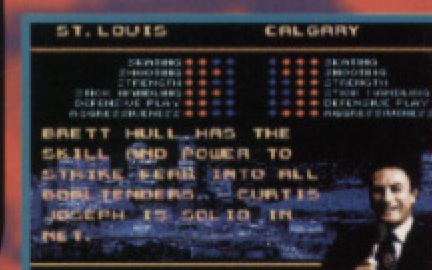






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BRETT HULL HOCKEY '95



▲ Riveting analysis from our star sponsor.

Brett Hull is not, as you may expect, the brother of time-served entertainer with rare flightless bird prop, Emu, Rod. Chances are he would blank you if you asked him about the Pink Windmill or even worse, as Brett Hull is an Ice Hockey player, who are not generally known for their forbearance.

He's not just a player, Brett Hull is a star. 24 carat in North America, but we wouldn't expect you to know that either, as ice rinks in this country are reserved for dancers in latex Disney costumes and ex-Olympic Bolero exponents, not a dozen odd men in plastic shoulder pads carrying blunt instruments. The reason for this Brett badinage is a new game Accolade have shown us bearing his hallowed name. Brett Hull '95 is an almost all-new Ice Hockey simulation using an isometric viewpoint for the puck-related antics of the American leagues. Almost new, since the game uses elements of an unreleased Brett Hull game of last year which Accolade were not quite sure about. Certainly the speed and playability of this version seems much improved. All the top players like Wayne Gretzky (who of course means nothing to you) are included, along with authentic team stats and rosters. Mindful of the four-way competition from EA's own NHLPA Hockey, we'll be passing opinion on this latest sports sim in a forthcoming MEAN MACHINES.



▼The blue team could make a bit on the side as formation ice dancers.





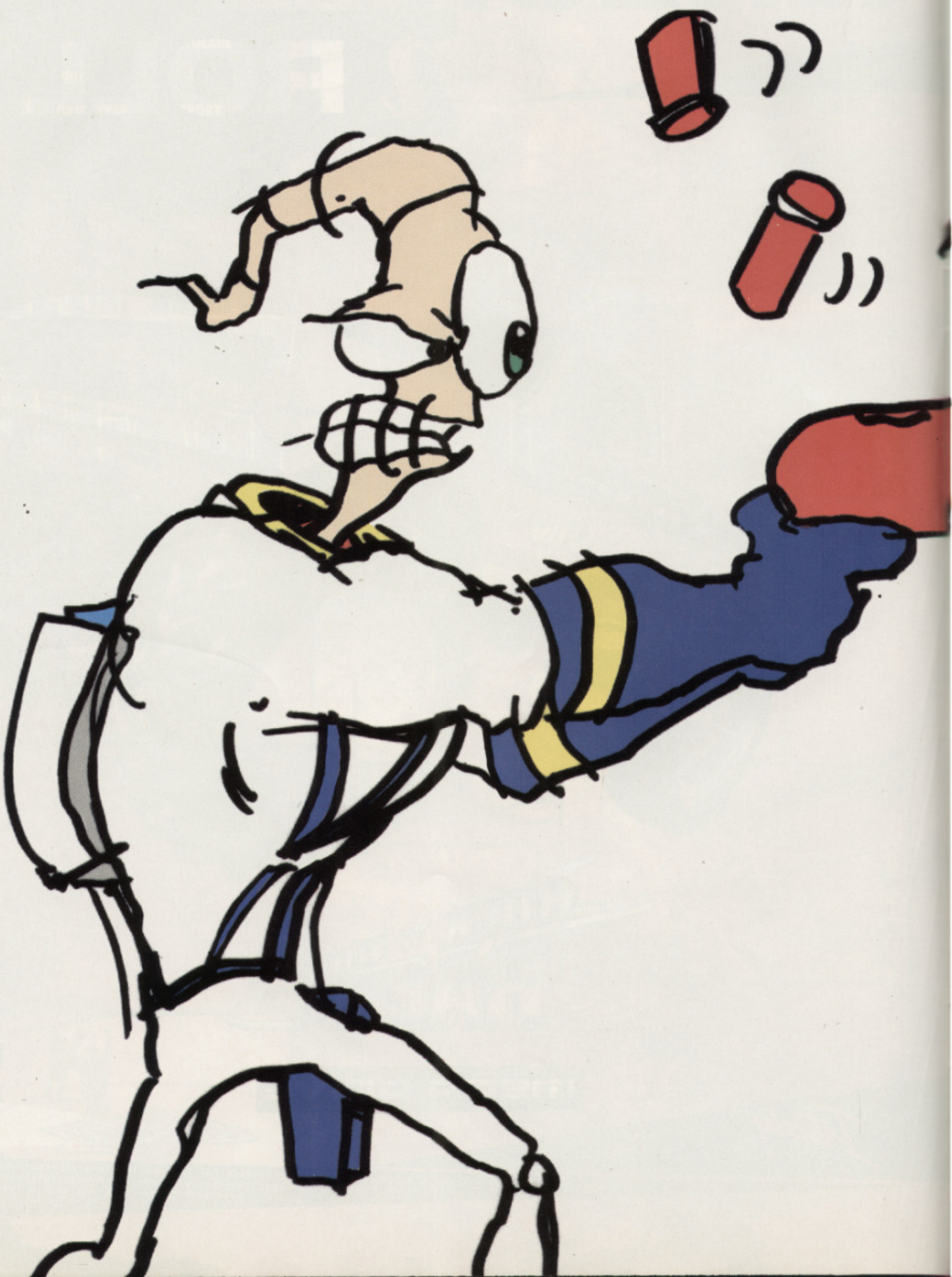
▲ The goalmouth is literally quivering with impending score tension.

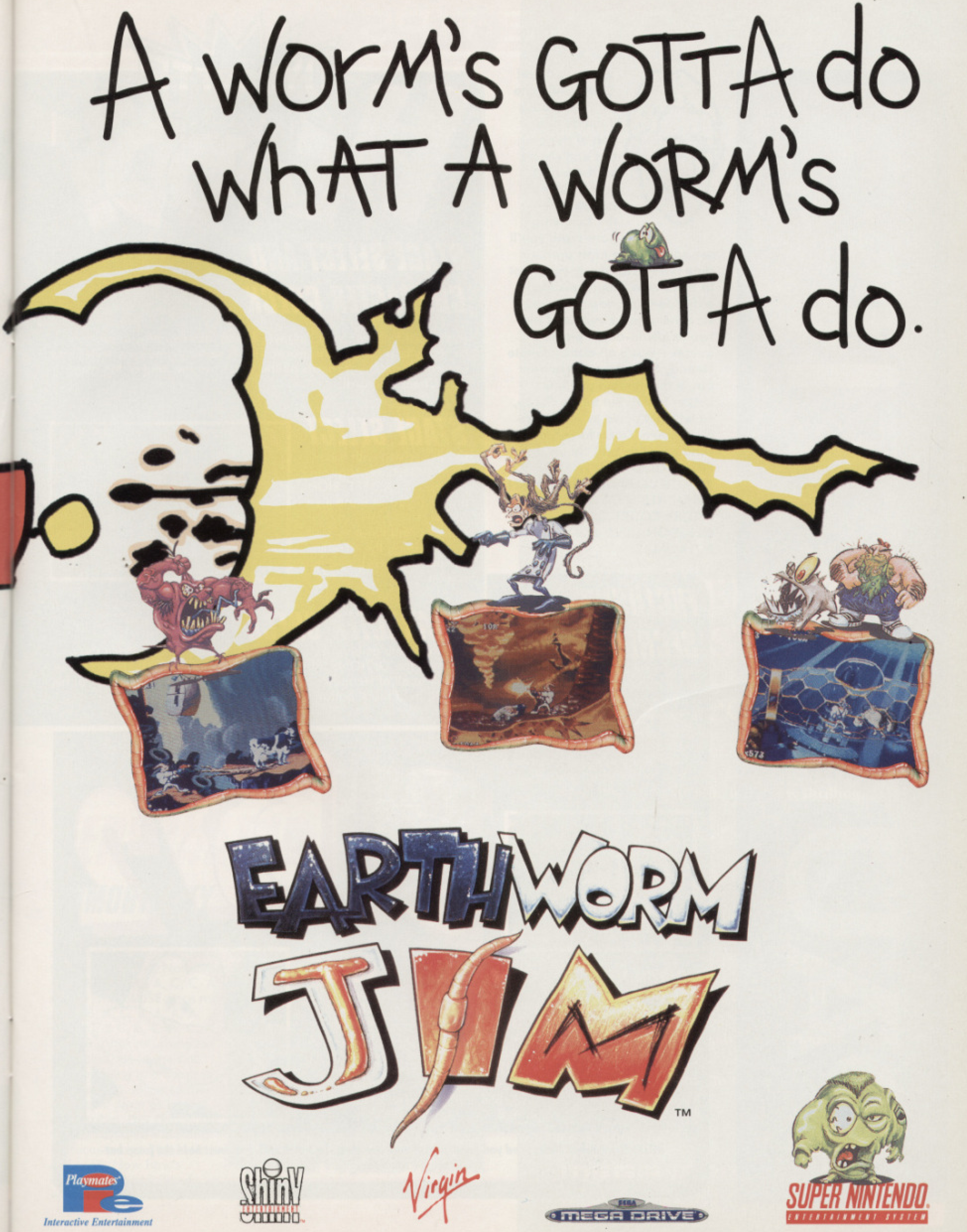


SPEAK TO ME

In addition to Brett (not the one from Suede) Accolade have enlisted Al (not the one from Happy Days). Al Michaels that is, celeb TV Sports commentator Stateside, who makes little comments about the teams before and during the match. The game also employs a running commentary of the sort Sega tried a few years back with Joe Montana Sportstalk Football. A selection of digitised phrases are strung together to match the action. At the moment it's working quite well on Brett Hull, with most passing, intercepting and shooting being integrated into the flow of speech.


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PAUL'S TIPS



Hey there! Welcome to Paul's Yuletide selection of the best tips and cheats on the planet. Just a quick glance across the following pages and you'll see some of the most up-to-date titles to hit the shelves, not to mention a couple of golden oldies to bring new life to classic carts. And as ever we have two totally in-depth player's guides – Gus's all-out Dynamite Headdy formula, and chopper fun in the mission guide to Urban Strike. But talk is cheap, so let's get down to some serious tipping. Don't forget to send your tips and cheats to: I'M SO UGLY AND THEY'RE SO BEAUTIFUL, PAUL'S TIPS, MEAN MACHINES SEGA MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

DYNAMITE HEADDY

STAGE SELECT AND CHARACTER CHECK

As Gerard McKean from Nagoya, Japan, quite rightly points out, the early bird catches the worm. This is certainly the case with these exclusively excellent cheats all the way from the land of the rising sun. Cheers Gerard!

STAGE SELECT

On the screen with the 'Game Start' message simply input C, A, LEFT, RIGHT, and B. If you've done it correctly, Headdy will say "Nice!". And there you have it, bang the START button to access the select screen.



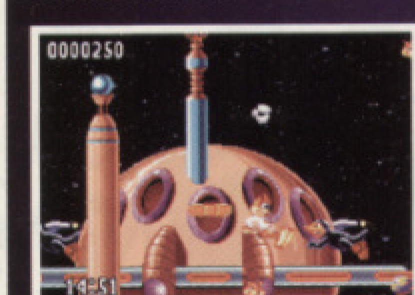
CHARACTER CHECK

Use the same as before, ie C, A, LEFT, RIGHT, and B. Place the cursor over the OPTIONS, and by using LEFT and RIGHT, you can take a look at all of Headdy's bodies. What's more, to grab a look at his heads, hold the A button while using LEFT and RIGHT.

BUBSY 2

EXCLUSIVE SECRET CODES

Being a close personal friend of young Bubsy the Bobcat, it's hardly surprising that he has let me into a load of secrets for his latest adventure. All of the codes are entered on the title screen and the relevant noise will sound to inform you of a successful cheat.





POWER-UP	CODE	SOUND
Half Gravity	UP, C, C, C, DOWN	Boing
All Levels Completed	UP, A, A, A, DOWN	Clunk
50 Lives	B, UP, B, B, A	Whoop
99 Ballzookas	B, A, LEFT, LEFT	Pop
99 Diving Suits	B, LEFT, UP, B	Pop
99 Portable Holes	RIGHT, UP, B, B	Pop
99 Smart Bombs	C, C, C, UP, DOWN, C	Pop
Invulnerability	C, A, B, C, UP, DOWN	Pop
Rubber Walls	B, A, B, C	Pop

NOTE: The Rubber Walls send you bouncing all over the shop. To stand still, you must hold the jump button down.

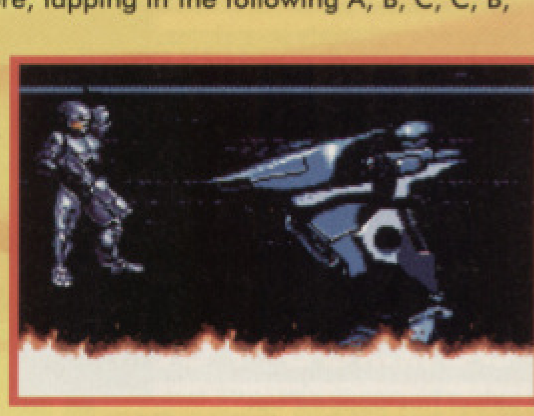


ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR

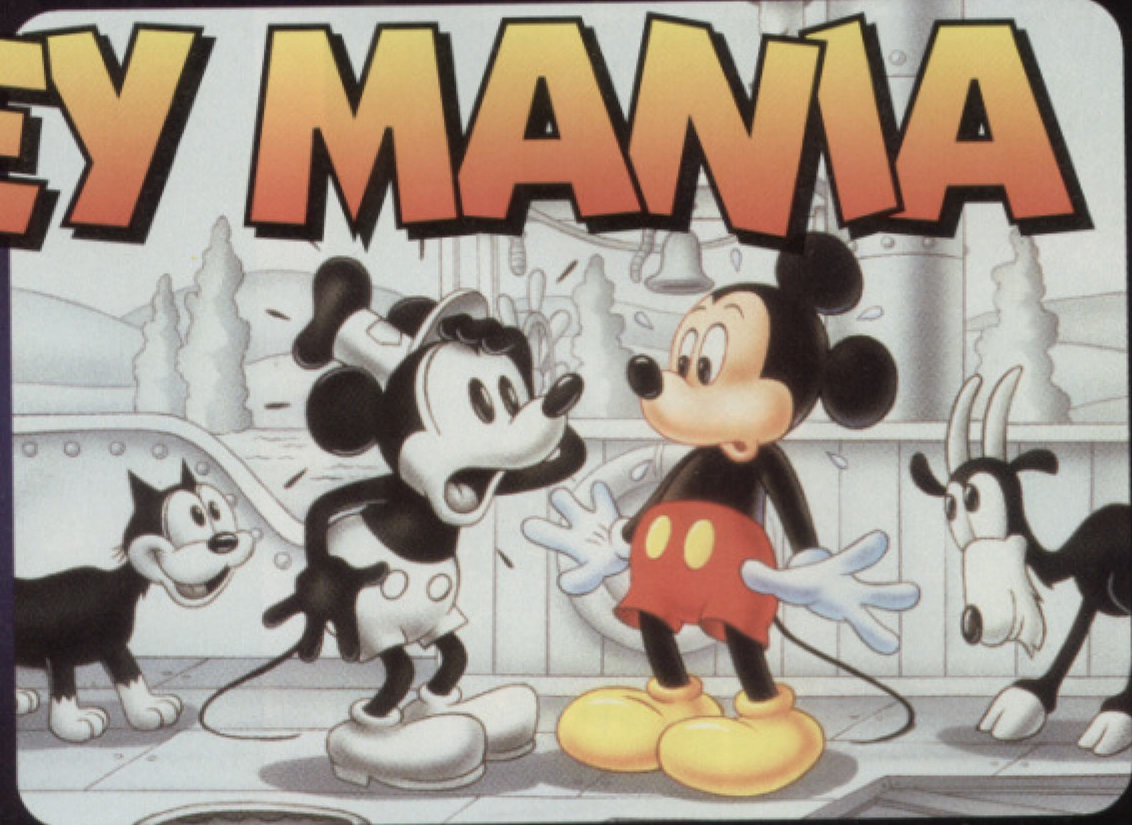


IMMORTALITY

Stephen Carroll was the first among a lot of you to send me this cheat to make Robocop immortal. Start the game as normal and PAUSE on the Trainer Level. Now enter the code C, B, A, B, B, A, B, B, C, B, B, C, C, B, B, C, B, C, A, C, C, A, A, A, B, B, B, A, C, A. Then UNPAUSE the action and PAUSE once more, tapping in the following A, B, C, C, B, A, C, B, A, C, B, A, A, A, C, A, C, B C, A, C, A, C, A B, C, B. After returning to the game, go to the first grey building and climb to the very top. Move to the edge and jump as far left as possible. Hey presto, all will be revealed including six faces and a silhouetted Robocop. Now how's about that then? Good work Stephen.



MICKEY MANIA



SECRET ROOM

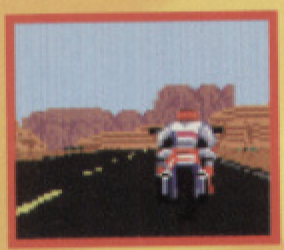
Even though it has only just hit the shelves, already a tippette for this smart platformer has hit the MMS doormat. According to Peter Sinanan (30) from Bracknell, on the second level of the Mad Doctor stage, instead of running into the pipe at the end of the level, you should jump on top of it and look upwards. While looking upwards, make Mickey perform a jump, and amazingly enough the mouseketeer will do a super high leap, allowing him to walk off the screen and to the right where he will find a secret room. In the secret room, Mickey will discover a valuable extra life and some extra hit points. Hurrah!

COMBAT CARS

LEVEL SELECT

For those of you having a bit of a hard time getting through some of the levels on this tough little racer, Andrew Blundell from Swansea is here to help. On the OPTIONS screen put the yellow box around EXIT and hold down A, B, and C. When you press START, the word 'cheat' should appear. Now press LEFT and RIGHT for the level of your choice.

ROAD RASH II



SECRET BIKE

An oldie, but still a goodie, and what with Rash III gunning its way to the Megadrive, it's nice to find a cheat for a predecessor. Chris Lewis of Taunton informs me that if you hold DOWN, UP, A, C, and START, some chords will strike and when you go to the bike shop the super bike Wild Thing 2000 is all yours.

MARKO'S MAGIC FOOTBALL



LAST LEVEL PASSWORD

Not a particularly stunning game, but nevertheless a last level code might help those in trouble. On the Password Screen simply type in ELF and whisk yourself to the final battle. Thanks to Dean Martin (not THE Dean Martin!) from Derry, N. Ireland for the tip.

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS



NUMBER ONE CHEAT

It's excellent to see plenty of tips for this top notch knock-about, and S Richardson has some crackers. Once you've accessed the World Tour, pick a player and check their password on the first day. Remember the code and push A, B, C, and START together. Then on the password screen, input the password but make sure you enter the last two letters as BB. If you're Pete Sampras or S Schmidt you'll find yourself ranked number one, and number two if you're anyone else. This means you'll be able to play in the first tournament. Another code you could use is FCJLJDG, also ranking you number one and with 45 points for the first round.

INCREDIBLE HULK

LEVEL SELECT



Simon Howe from Paignton certainly is a feisty little devil, but still he has a rather cool level select for the big green one. During the game hit PAUSE and enter UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT. Now kill yourself off, losing all of your lives. When you return to the beginning, you will notice after the intro that a handy level select has popped up.

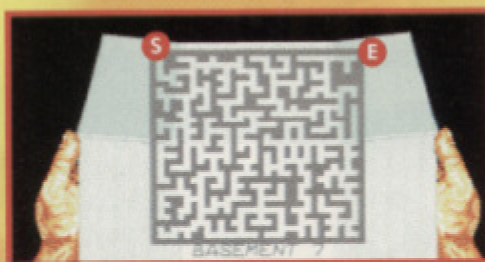

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ZERO TOLERANCE

THE FINAL CONFLICT

As promised the final instalment of the player's guide from last month to help you finish off the final boss once and for all.

SUB BASEMENT 7 - OFFf7p]E7



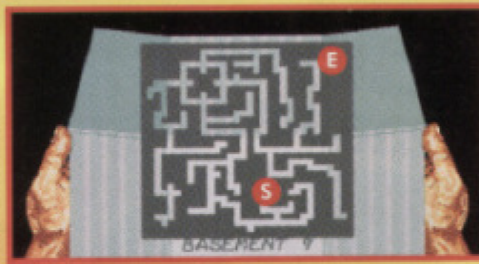
Phew! It's starting to get hot and foggy down here. Keep those ears open for remaining bug-eyed monsters.

SUB BASEMENT 8 - HUodmvJGZ



Finally you're out of those nasty old mazes. At the first cross-roads head right for the mopping up operation.

SUB BASEMENT 9 - Lr6dhrM]p



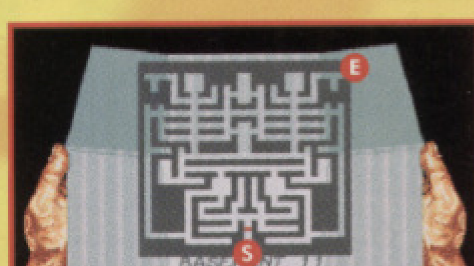
You're almost there. Just hold on in for the final confrontation. Utilise all of the skill acquired from the previous levels and stay alive.

SUB BASEMENT 10 - Jb8d2rN?j



It's getting darker, all the more reason to keep your wits about you. Unfortunately it's back to the maze structure.

SUB BASEMENT 11 - d5Zdwa]DN



A mirror image of itself, the penultimate level can be extremely confusing. Not to worry, the exit is in the top right corner.

SUB BASEMENT 12



The corridor is a long slog, but it's nothing compared to the rat-run that conceals the biggest and meanest nastie. Here's a quick glimpse and it's up to you to do the right thing and end his evil plot to take over the Earth.

SONIC & KNUCKLES

PLAY SONIC 1 WITH THE SONIC AND KNUCKLES CART

What's all this 'No Way' business? 'Yes Way' says Gordon and Emily Brants from Staines, you can play Sonic 1 with the world's first backwardly-compatible cart. Plug Sonic 1 into the slot on top of Sonic and Knuckles, and when the screen with Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, and Egg Face appears, all saying 'No Way', press A, B, and C simultaneously on pad one. The screen will now say 'Get Blue Spheres' with the options START, LEVEL, and CODE. You can now play as either Sonic or Knuckles by changing the colour of the stars on the icons from blue to red (press A, B, or C to change colours). You can also change the codes to access different levels of the Special Stage by altering the numbers and pressing START. And here they are...

Level 1	3659	8960	3263
Level 2	2965	3192	9023
Level 3	3610	2354	7327
Level 4	2921	0274	3999
Level 5	3737	7423	1487
Level 6	3053	9029	9071
Level 7	3698	8191	7375
Level 8	3009	6111	4047
Level 9	3482	7286	3167
Level 10	2809	6267	2575
Level 11	3454	5429	0879



GAME GEAR

MORTAL KOMBAT II

ACCESS JADE AND SMOKE

Richard Hughes comes up trumps with the info on how to fight those illustrious hidden combatants in the best beat 'em up on the Gear. To take on Jade, press diagonally UP/ RIGHT twice when your character's picture passes the question mark on Mortal Mountain. And if you fancy a bout with Smoke, hold START and DOWN when the Toasty face appears. Outstanding!

MEGA-CD

BATTLE CORPS

LEVEL SELECT

An absolutely superb offering from Core on the Mega-CD, Battlecorps was a pretty substantial challenge. So it's a winner to see an ace level select coming all the way from Belgium courtesy of Franck Dave. Apparently if you go to the Practise Mode and press PAUSE, then enter B, A, B, A, RIGHT, A, C, UP, and START, the screen will start to flash. When you start the game, a map will appear on the character select screen and you can choose your level by pressing the joypad UP or DOWN.

pads for Professionals



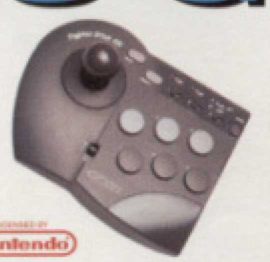
LETS GET TO WORK



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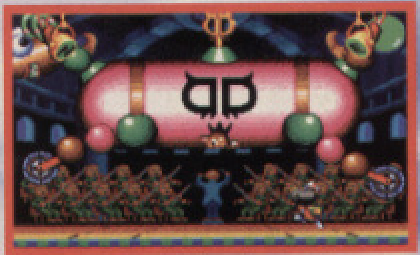
DYNAMITE HEADDY

A treasure to behold: Dynamite Headdy, one of the most beguiling platformers in many a Christmas release schedule. Few games have caused this level of backbiting and sniping over its alleged strengths and deficiencies. Frankly, ma'am, we're puzzled. We rated it so highly because basically it's very good. Hopefully, this guide to its bossy conundrums and secret bonuses will convince you of the same.

The SB symbol stands for each of the game's legion Secret Bonus Points. We've managed to pin point just about every one, but we admit a couple still elude us.

MAD DOG AND HEADY

Trouble Bruin's first onslaught is easily dealt with.
1. Duck in the left hand corner while he draws in energy.
2. Wait for him to jump four times then leap over to the right.



3. Retreat left as he soars back to the right letting off energy globes.
4. Leap over the slow bouncing globe and headbutt him as he staggers.

SB ***Destroy the abductor robot in the supposed 'demo' section with repeated headbutts. The best method involves standing directly underneath him and firing upwards.***

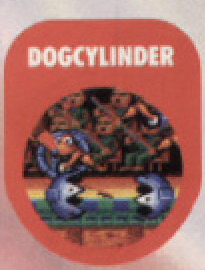


TOYZ IN THE HOOD

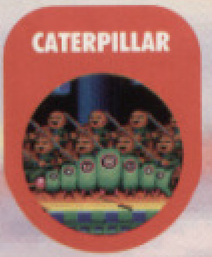
This is Stevie Wonder gaming territory, with only a twerp missing the two secret rooms, the first placed beyond the first wall rise on the right. After mounting the wall pull the plunger to crush the oncoming hoards, then pick the invisi-head to pass the foot stompers. The robot demi-boss simply leaps from right to left, then activates an attraction device so keep your distance from the sides of the screen. The second secret room lies to the left at the top of the next shaft. Duck in the conspicuous 'pits' below the snake boss to avoid his fire.

Mad Dog boss is a dumb animal. He's only dangerous when landing, and the safe spot is located at his head. When his head is pointing right, something nasty will fall from his mouth (1. Bomb 2. Caterpillar 3. Dog cylinder 4. basketball). Best offensive head here is exploding stars, or speed, which gives you the reach to get that wagging tail.







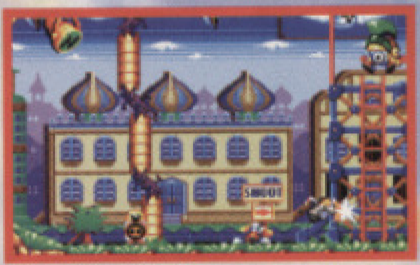




SB ***The practice area is not mandatory, but completing the subgames results in three precious bonus points, almost half the level quota.***



SB ***Knock the guard off the watchtower while wearing the hammer head before crushing it with the ball.***



SB ***The two strange animals that leap from the cage after the robot dies are worth a headbutting bonus point each.***



SB ***Don't be tempted by the tiny headdy exploration route. Use the spike head to reach the snake demi-boss, whose demise results in a bonus point.***

SB ***The last point is the trickiest. On random occasions the mad dog boss will descend with Beau in his mouth. Butt him before he exits for that elusive eighth point.***



DOWN UNDER — BATTLE SHOW

This is the yawniest part of the game. The slanting floor of 'Down Under' is easy to get to grips with, as are the helicopter attacks if you use the shadows to judge the screen depth and fire at them diagonally.
The following 'Backstage Battle' is tricky but rarely fatal. Watch for the arrows that indicate a violent swing of the tail, and follow their direction to compensate. Bruin is only vulnerable at his centre point, the easiest point is at the horizontal part of your spin.
For the 'Battle Show', stick to the sides and get in diagonal hits to the upper part. When the lower section swings wildly in your area, leap over and continue from the other side. When his legs emerge watch out for the cane attack! With the upper part gone, bottom invokes a new four globe attack from his top hat. Crouch to avoid the higher one, leap over the lower one and get in a flurry of hits.
Clothes Encounter is invulnerable until all his costume is dislodged. Beau indicates the correct order.
Costume 1:Duck underneath the fire and tackle from behind. You must duck and fire to get those clawed feet.



Costume 2:The problem. Getting the middle section is much easier with the aid of the speed head. Leap over the spinning skirt and be very wary of the old head.
Costume 3:Claws are the areas of main danger. Watch out for the Secret Bonus.





SB ***A bonus point mystery exists on Down Under. We know its there, but can't figure out a method for it... The Backstage battle point comes from butting the slightly larger drone puppy that Trouble Bruin sometimes launches.***

SB ***An SB is awarded for taking out the top section of the Guest Puppet first (as tackling it the other way round is a damned sight easier).***

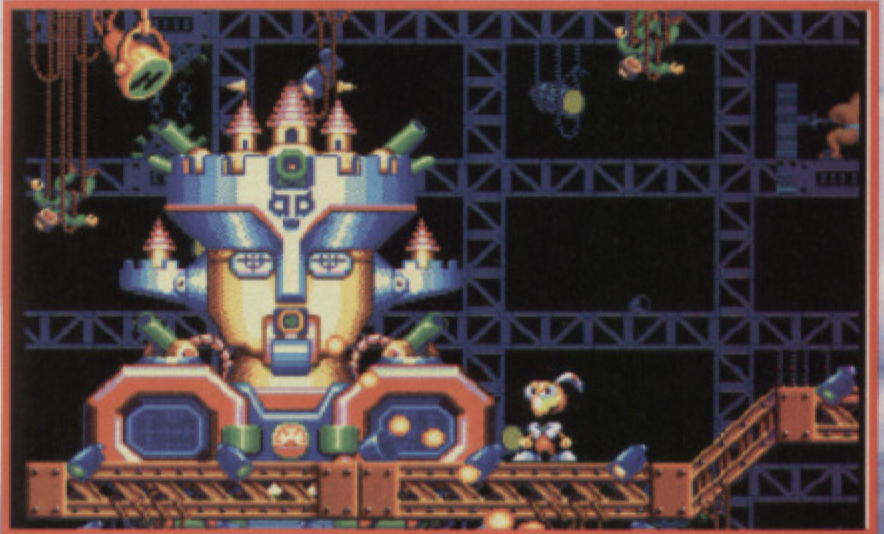


SB ***Flummoxed again by the final point, which comes on the third incarnation of the Clothes Encounter boss. But what means we don't know.***

TERMINATE HER TOO

There is a way to play the initial 'hit me' buttons without being hit by the wheels. Jumping back over the second one sharply prevents you being steam-rollered. The next event is the King Boss. His weak spot is the mouth, which also provides him with a weapon. Keep jumping to avoid the lock on sight, but keep to his right to avoid the fist. When you descend, butt the headcases onto the skewers, and climb onto the second set to reach an extra life. The tank demi-boss requires you to butt one of his bombs diagonal, timed to land on the driver's head. It takes patience. In the second rigging section, use the suction head to get the hard-to-reach fruit and point bonuses. 'Mad Mechs' should commence with a trip to the right as tiny Headdy, in order to get the semi-secreted extra life. Take out all the doors and use the cogwheels to go right. 'Mad . Mechs 2', to rotate the arms vertically, jump and fire



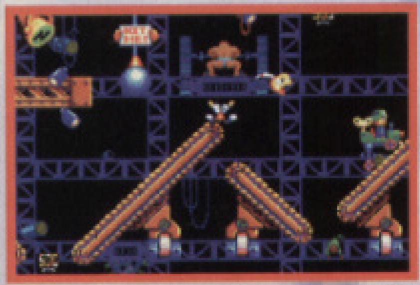


upwards. There are some points bonuses in the bottom right hand corner.

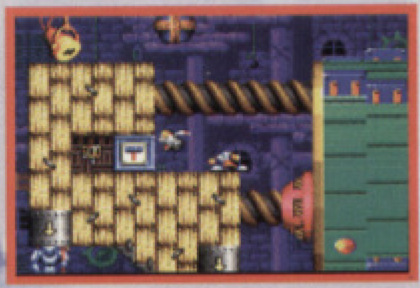
SB ***Drop a bomb on the front red knob section of the tank. After knocking the man hydrant to the side, stand on top and fire down. He'll shatter, leaving a point bonus.***



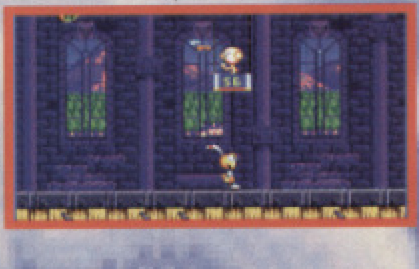
SB ***In the rigging level, Strike the second 'hit me' button twice in a row to reverse the conveyors and score a secret bonus.***



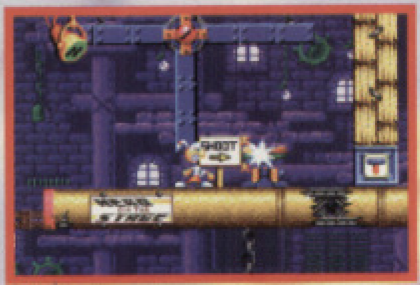
SB ***In Mad Mechs, systematically take out all the hammer marked doors for a special bonus.***



SB ***Once you emerge from Mad Mechs 2, hang around for Beau to appear on his window-cleaning cradle. Copious butting dislodges another bonus.***



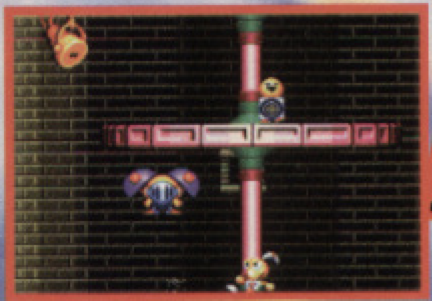
SB ***A point comes from breaking each of the fans. To do this you must butt then wait for the fan to restart before repeating.***



PUPPET TOWER

The Stair Wars section looks trickier than it is. Trouble Bruin's contraption has two stages. When he hovers to the right, be standing on a platform just below his horizontal plane. If his head begins to bob, jump up a couple of platforms — he launches a tower cutter which will snip away all platforms up to its upper blade. If his eyes close, he's about to drift into range over the centre of the tower. Headdy is safe below the height of his head.

Inside the tower, first run from the deflating snowmen. Then on the stage with the two rotating arms, take up a safe vantage point on the level above and fire diagonally down. Skip past the wall mortars, to face the ladybug creature. Best tactics are to skip over the rolling ball (it does two circuits, stops then does another two before opening) then grab the time freeze head while it's jumping, as only the underbelly is vulnerable.

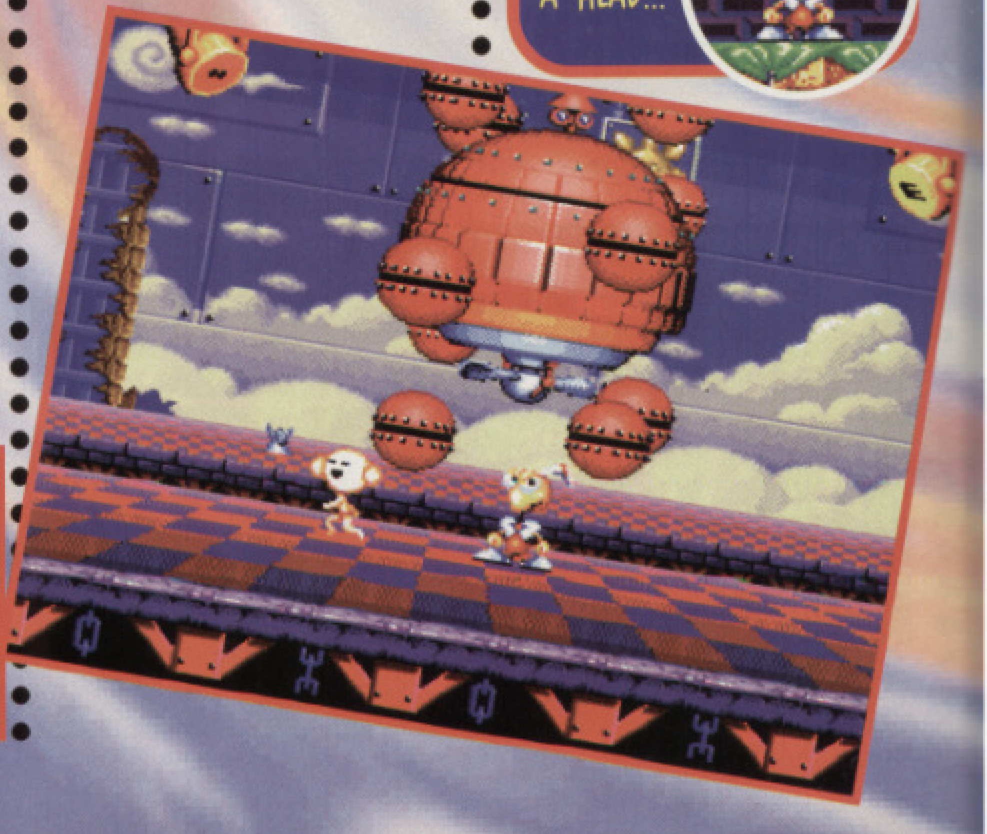


Up on the roof, Spinderella's boom is worse than her bite. Keep running right, only pausing to avoid her pummels. On the nearside, the first two pummels will not contact with the roof, then three will. When you complete the half circuit, attack the target cylinder. Try not to face the pummelling attack at the strategic spike points. Once Spinderella rotates the playing area, the technique is reversed — though her second pummel will connect with the ground.

SB ***If the tower backdrop scrolls in a full circuit during Stair Wars, you are rewarded with a bonus point. The second point is to be gained in the tower, but it's one of the few remaining mysteries...***



SB ***While battling Spinderella, beau will walk past. Butt him quickly to snatch the final point of this stage.***



PLAYING WITH BALLS

An easy technique to beat the subgame. Simply position yourself under the left launcher, and always push balls vertically. The bad bottom basket comes every fourth star basket. Using patience, you should never been in danger of dunking a bad 'un. Aim for the top baskets, by butting at full jumping height.



NO MORE FILLING YOUR HEADS WITH NONSENSE. THESE TIPS HAVE GIVEN ME A PAIN IN MY CRANIUM, SO IT'S SCENTED WET ONES ACROSS THE BROW AND A DARKENED ROOM UNTIL NEXT MONTH, WHEN THINGS REALLY COME TO A HEAD...





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URBAN STRIKE



PLAYER'S GUIDE

Number three in the Strike series, and the deadliest of the bunch, Urban Strike poses a serious challenge to even the most adept gamer. Set in the 21st century, you're that wholesome kinda apple pie-loving patriot, who just lives to save the good 'ol US of A from marauding lunatics hellbent on taking over the world. Set in two halves, the first leg of this guide begins in the jungles of Hawaii and closes over the metropolis of San Francisco.

BARE ESSENTIALS

The key to being a successful Strike pilot is keeping an eye on your gauges. Constant reference to the map screen is an absolute must for navigational purposes, but above all your Armour, Fuel, and Weapon meters must be under constant supervision. Even when the gauges are in yellow, you should be planning your next stock take. A general tip in the early levels is to blast smaller buildings surrounding missions, as on the whole they contain supplies, as we will see later. But when you get to the cityscapes, don't bank on similar circumstances – always think ahead. Remember, time is life, and you ain't got a lot of time!

CAMPAIGN ONE: HAWAII

You're in at the deep end. But a new recruit has got to learn sometime. There's no risk of aimlessly flying into a danger zone, so take advantage of this and get the feel of your wings. Try to get into the habit of not spraying unnecessary hails of wasteful bullets, but rather pot shots. Also keep a look out for innocent hostages, DO NOT shoot them, they restore valuable armour points when returned to safety. Whatever you do, don't rush: more haste less speed!

QUICK WINCH



This little beautie is lying low about half way up the far left of the map next to a hostage. Pick it up and double your capacity to gather supplies.

VISITOR CENTRES



On your way to destroy the radars on top of the centres, take a quick fly past the beach. Beneath those straw huts lie ammo and fuel dumps.
On spying the crashed jet fighter, put a slug in the enemy soldier to save Legal, an MIA co-pilot, and seriously improve your chances in further missions.

TELESCOPE MIRRORS



Blow the trucks from under the precious mirrors and airlift the components to the barge in the north. Only two trips are necessary.

STEALTH SHIPS



Your best form of attack is to sweep over these ships, lobbing missiles at them. A face on attack is foolhardy. If you find yourself short on supplies, a gander round the woods to the back of the lagoons and some hut bombing will reveal some goodies. Also, to the south west of the armour repair, a hut hides an extra life.

PLASTIC SURGEON



Once the snippers have been dispatched, the elusive surgeon requires a couple of warning shots into the hut to coax him out, not too many or you'll kill him.

ENEMY BRIDGE



All very straight forward stuff, make your lot a little easier by taking out some of the boats and armoured vehicles during some of the earlier missions.

LE SHARK



On your way to rescue the Green Berets, keep an eye open for a monstrous dorsal fin poking above the water surface.
Around Jaws you'll see some shipwreckees, give them a lift to safety to restore lost armour points.

GREEN BERETS



First off, you're going to have to find yourself an eradication bomb from the most southerly island. Now be very careful not to drop this or it's game over man! Take it to the second blip on the map screen and hover over the purple flare. It will drop automatically when in position, and now it's a case of picking off the snippers one by one whilst winching the troops to safety.
With the berets on board, and the intelligence reports in the bag, it's off to the oil rigs of Baja for the next confrontation.

CAMPAIGN TWO: BAJA OIL RIGS (C9HW7KZR4KD)

You're all at sea in the battle against Malone's off-shore bases. There's going to be some chopping and changing between 'copters, and you'll need to familiarise yourself with the Osprey III passenger carrier. Supplies are scarcer, and enemy vessels take a lot more hits before giving up. Keep close tabs on the tugs boats carrying ammo and fuel.

RADAR STATION



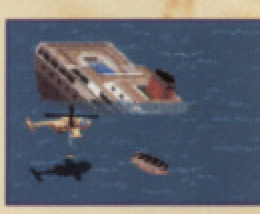
First things first, fly to the uppermost refinery building and blast it to acquire the Quick Winch. On attacking the radar building, take extra care around the missile launchers. Catch them on their blind side.

SMALL RIGS



Troublesome little targets these. Not only are they populated by Malone's forces with rocket launchers, but on the towers are some deadly Phalanx MX rapid fire missile launchers. Creep in from the corner of the screen, fire off a couple of rockets, and retreat to avoid being hit. Make sure you destroy the buildings on the corners to reveal hidden bonuses.

PASSENGERS



Intelligence report! A cruise liner has been hit by Malone's gun boats, and you have three minutes to swap choppers and rescue the passengers before the enemy starts mopping up. Speed is of the essence, concentrate on the two lifeboats to quickly achieve your quota. Whisk them off the most northerly of the small rigs to replenish lost armour.

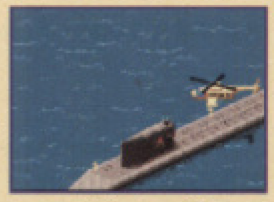
DESTROYER



The artillery on the destroyer is very heavy, so much so that you must keep hold of the Osprey and its 2000 armour points. The lack of speed means sweeps are the best form of attack.



RUSSIAN SUB



Don't forget the Russians are our allies now and they need our help. More victims of Malone, their sub has been crippled and the reactor is in meltdown. Remove the threat of other 'copters and boats before attempting the airlift. Once the submariners are aboard, it's a quick jaunt to the left where you'll find the repair kit for the sub's reactor. You've got a time limit of two minutes before meltdown.

JET FIGHTERS



We're entering the danger zone of the large rig. You must hit the jet fighters before they have a chance to take off. Watch for the armed response from the bunkers, and be as quick as you can.

MAIN OIL RIG



The area has to be secured before any attempt on the main building can be made. Hidden within one of the exterior buildings. It's now time to disembark and head off inside the rig to destroy it once and for all.



CAMPAIGN THREE: MAIN RIG (ZDVS9LB7CHF)

These boots were made for walking. It's a whole new game running through the corridors of the rig, especially as you only have 200 armour points and seriously limited ammo. To replenish supplies, shoot the barrels and racks of missiles and you will uncover power-ups.

GUN CAMERAS

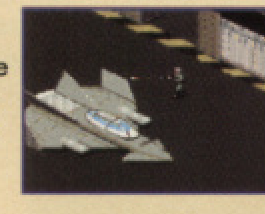


Ouch! The spray from these cannons can seriously damage your health. Creep around



the corners to avoid taking the full brunt of their force.

ENEMY F29



It's not too much of a hassle taking out these unarmed fighters. The occasional guard may be hanging around the corner.

AGENT



Your agent on the inside must be rescued unharmed to gain the information on how to set the beacon calling the strike force to attack the rig. After saving him, find the two barrels round the corner for stocks.

BEACON



Run the gauntlet down the corridor of gun cameras to find the beacon. Press A to set the attack.

CAMPAIGN FOUR: MEXICO (9G3MT9LGJ4C)

The barren Mexican desert is the next port of call. Your main opponents are in the form of the extremely effective Wolverine tanks. But luckily stacks of innocent civilian buildings stacked high with fuel and ammo are dotted behind home base to keep you on the go. Frequent returns to the landing pad are also required to drop off the numerous hostages.

SCOUT TEAM



Rescue your buddies from Malone's clutches in the POW camp. A careful approach on the guard towers is needed before attempting to enter the



camp. Watch out for the Wolverine inside the camp. Most of the buildings contain goodies, but only use them if necessary.

QUICK WINCH



Before the assault on the enemy camp, head to the top-left corner, destroy the houses and grab a load of the winch.

ENEMY CAMP



Head on in there and waste those buildings. But watch for the larger houses and the massive AAA M Flak cannons that lurk inside.

CONTRACTORS



Does Malone know no shame? He's even imprisoned defence contractors and has sent his paras in to execute them. Knock out the towers, followed by the paras, but at all costs, miss the building or you'll kill the civilians. If nothing happens, check the perimeter for lone soldiers.

GAV PLANS



Very simple operation. Blast the modern looking buildings and grab the blueprints. The plans inform you to press C to hotwire the GAV.

GAVS



Yoinks! Time to jump ship again. On this occasion, the Ground Assault Vehicle will be your means of transport. Firstly, shoot the guard on the odd looking tower and then land the chopper. Once inside the GAV, wipe out the other GAVs using both the B and the C button to double the fire power.

FACTORY



Close down Malone's factory for good by finding the smart bomb in the shed to the west of the factory. Winch it up and drop it bang on his doorstep. Stand well back and watch with mirth as the fireball consumes Malone's plans.

CAMPAIGN FIVE: SAN FRANCISCO (NW6T4CNHPVS)

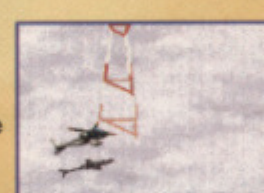
The streets of San Francisco are buzzing with the sound of Malone's armoured vehicles and hover 'copters. Supplies are particularly thin on the ground, so must be used sparingly. Tactical, ie sweeping patterns, flying is only way to tackle the Landshark and Armadillo armoured vehicles.

GOLDEN GATE AND BAY BRIDGE



On route to removing the bombs from the bridge, take the most southerly route possible to avoid the threat of the tanks on the road. On arrival at the bridges it's simply a question of finishing off the hover planes and removing the bombs.

RADIO TOWER



Radio KBZ Malone is threatening to broadcast your location to the enemy forces. Destroy the antenna before it has a chance, but be extra vigilant in picking off the snippers obscured by the fog.

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS WEST



Kill the guys with bazookas on the corners of the skyscrapers before demolishing the structures. Use the chain gun on the structures so as not to waste valuable ammunition.

ARMY BASE



Smart use of the smart bombs is essential to wipe out the stockpile of Presidio tanks. For a bonus extra life, rubble the small white building near the artillery position.

MICRON LABS



Malone must be stopped! Work on his secret new laser weapon has already started, but you can call time on his plans by destroying the Micron Labs in the west of the city. Pay special attention to the Landsharks using the tried and trusted sweep of the area.

HOME BASE



Alert! Alert! Your home landing pad is under enemy fire. By now ammo will be low and the hover jets will take more cunning to out do.

HENCHMAN

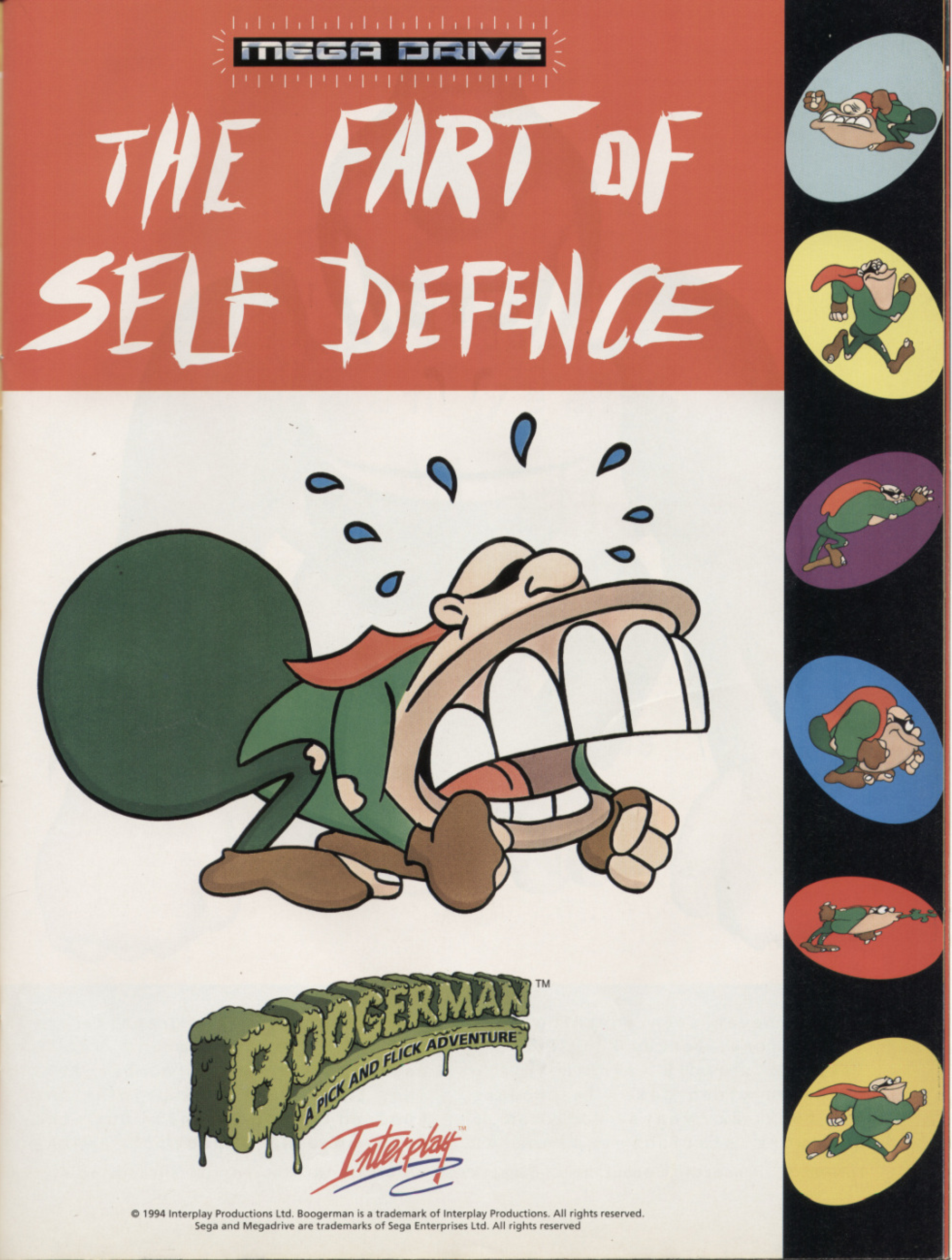


Stop that car! Malone's henchman is trying to do a runner with the news that San Francisco is under attack. Chase the red car along the south highway, and place a few missiles through the rear windshield.

NEXT MONTH'S INSTALMENT...

Tune in next month for the final half of the player's guide. Alcatraz is your next battle zone to rescue the MIA Long Haul, and then it's onwards to final battle with Malone him self. Keep those rotors turning.




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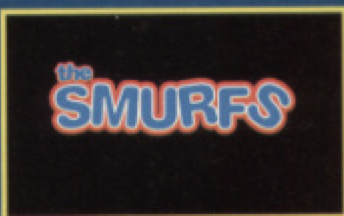
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the SMURF



I	8
PLAYERS	MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

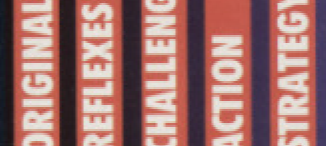
PRICE	£44.99
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RELEASE	JANUARY

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM/HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
20,000

ORIGIN
Licensed to French programmers Infogrames by the creators of the popular electric blue cartoon characters. Infogrames' debut on Sega.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Rescue the smurfs captured by Gargamel, which are waiting caged across the 22 level game expanse.

The Smurfs fall from media stardom was not a pretty sight. After their chart-busting success with Father Abraham, the inevitable 'musical differences' led to a split between the bright blue dwarves and their human accompaniment. A lengthy court battle ensued, with the Smurfs disputing Abraham's right to bill himself 'Father Abraham of Father Abraham and the Smurfs', which he was using for a season at Butlins' Pwheli Westworld.

Press hounding followed Smurfette's highly publicised spell at the Betty Smurf clinic for sasparilla dependency. Basically, the whole tribe decided to return to their secluded Belgian village and leave the spotlight on the Osmonds' revival. But the quietude was short-lived when their old enemy Gargamel, jealous of their success and the failure of his own rave single 'Life's a Witch', captures a sizeable portion of the community and claps them in irons. Of the remainder, it appears that Hefty smurf has the best chance of effecting a rescue, but his powers alone will not be enough...









The smurfs that Hefty rescues take over in certain sections of the game where their skills come in handy. Hefty himself can lift and carry objects like springs. Jokey has a booby-trapped parcel which explodes, demolishing walls and taking out enemies. Greedy has a potent line in offensive French Fancies (or should that be Belgian buns?).

SWEETS AND SURPRISES







SMURF MOVIE

The chapters of your epic quest number twenty-two, with sub-divided sections within each. A large scrolling map serves the purpose of a progress recorder, and passwords are granted every five or so levels.

BLACK FOREST



Not a cakewalk by any manner of means. Take into account the giant ripe tomatoes, moles and killer butterflies. In the second plantation there's a nasty outbreak of malaria madness. One bite from a mosquito and you turn into a gibbering hopping idiot.

FIELD



Le Champs in French (hence victors of mediaeval field became 'Champions'). This field is quite pretty to look at, with lovely dewdrops and a fair amount of belly-hugging on your part.

BRIDGE



A neat little pioneering job this, lashings of logs and lashings, but a troublesome gap in the middle, requiring the compliance of feathered friends.

SMURF TOWN



Strangely, buckets of dirty dishwasher are the greatest danger to Hefty (too much concentrated 'Flash', reckon?). Other Smurfs are gaily going about their games and tasks and making a reet nuisance of themselves.

DAM



This level constitutes a neat puzzle of gaining height. Just when the thinking part is done, a rampant eagle gets frisky with the acorns.

VOLCANO



Classic forced action level based around a rapidly rising lava level followed by a flame-breathing dragon, who has Greedy in his clutches.

▼ ***A remnant of a 'Challenge Anneka' of yore. It's unsafe.***



RIDE 'EM SMURF-BOY!

The trip to Gargamel's dwelling throws up various opportunities to hitch rides and do the odd bit of driving. Early level rides on the backs of ducks and birds give way to a 3D toboggan session replete with snowman pointers, ramps and mental ski-s(m)urfers.





▲ *Take the plunge.*



▲ *Lightning strikes more than twice.*

COMMENT



GUS

On anyone's first inspection, this has little going for it — adults who admit to owning Megadrives would probably draw the line at buying a Smurfs cart, and kids in this country don't have a clue what they are. But judged against the recent spate of platformers, Smurfs more than holds its own. First it's a biggie, and variety counts for just as much, with no time to get bored with the graphics of any one section. Speaking of which, they go from quite ropey to very pretty in a short space of time, though character animation is poor throughout. Lacking any thumpingly original gameplay, the game benefits from some clever levels, alternating between left-right romps to self-contained puzzles, the sterling mine cart sequence and the fun 3-D bit. The only puzzlingly poor bit is the droning music which has no impact at all. If I was a buyer for a younger Megadrive owner, there wouldn't be much between this and Mickey Mania — both are high quality, though undemanding games. In fact, on the higher levels Smurfs is a bit rock — even adults might consider playing it in secret...

COMMENT



PAUL

Though at first they may seem unlikely platforming heroes, the Smurfs pull off a triumphant debut. This game is just plain fun to play. The gameplay is consistent in its ability to alter from platform, to 3D sled run, to mine cart mayhem, and keep the amusement level on high. In addition, there are plenty of levels to guarantee that you really get your fill of Smurfing adventure, and more importantly, your money's worth. However, I can't help but wonder if this is the kind of product that should be gracing our consoles, and that the time would be better invested in something more mould-breaking. The Smurf isn't a bad product, in fact it's rather well-rounded and nicely polished, but something far better suited to the younger section of the gaming generation.





GRAPHICS

86

▲Variety is the noteworthy feature here. Well sculpted landscapes covering all areas of the Smurf world.
▼Animation is poor and the graphics are ropey to start with.

SOUND

63

▲ Some of the samples are good and come out of nowhere — the dewdrops is one example.
▼ Generally the FX are crap and the music is dire to match.

PLAYABILITY

83

▲ Three distinct difficulties, with added sections on the higher levels. A fair amount of variety.
▼Doesn't look to inspiring at the outset. But...

LASTABILITY

87

▲ Smurfs is frequently stubborn but, intriguingly, doesn't raise you to frustration. It improves continually throughout. Play on...

VFM

85

▼Not especially good value compared to its platform contemporaries like Earthworm Jim.

OVERALL

86

Two-dimensional in appearance to die-hard gamers, but there's nothing better for precocious kid platformers coming out.

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S Power December

the SMURFS



1 PLAYERS

4 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE £29.99

BY INFOGRAMES

RELEASE JANUARY

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS:GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE

1ST DAY SCORE

Defeat the Snake boss.

ORIGIN

Stars of song, cartoons, and many a car sticker, the Smurfs first crossed the Channel in the late 70's.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

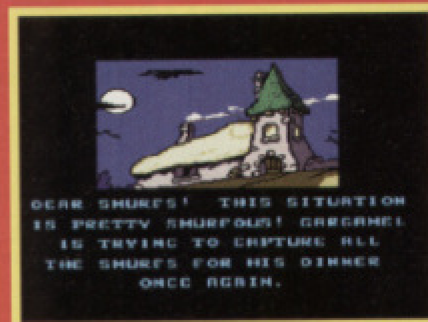
Cross the lands of Smurfdom to save the blue cutesies from Gargamel's casserole dish.

It had seemed the days of collecting Smurf car stickers had come to an end. The Smurfs became a national phenomenon literally overnight, swamping the country's TV channels and newspapers with their own peculiar sense of Belgian humour. The late 70s will surely be remembered as the age of the Smurf.

That is until now. A Smurf invasion is set to hit these shores once again, as the Smurfs embark upon the biggest comeback since John Travolta! Not only is it a relaunch of their own careers, they also intend to rescue the flagging Master System's fortunes. Mean ol' Gargamel's on the loose again with an appetite for revenge, only on tonight's menu he wants grilled Smurfette! With as much time as it takes to boil a cauldronful of water, you must help Hefty Smurf across the kingdom to Gargamel's castle on a mission to save the Smurf race.



◄ *Passing a log.*











▲ *How I lava to hate you.*





FRUITS OF THE FOREST

On such a long voyage, a Smurf is going to need some sustenance. Luckily for Hefty, Mother Nature has left some delights to pick up while on the move.

SASPARILLA LEAF

Leaves means points in this game, mah son! Pluck the tender leaves to rack up a respectable score.





BLACK SMURF

Tackle the adventure on anything other than the Easy level, and you will come face to face with one of Gargamel's victims, the Black Smurf. In an effort to hinder Hefty, Gargamel has mutated good clean living boys in blue into evil black zombies. A brush with one of these can leave you with nasty rash. Let's just hope Grandpa Smurf can do something to help them.



▲ *Must kill Blake Carrington...*

COMMENT



GUS

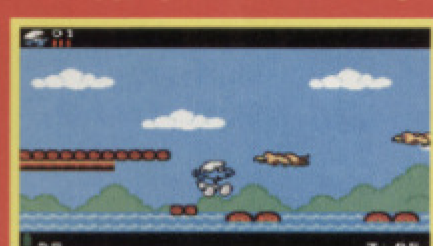
I can't think of a better combination than Smurfs and Master Systems — they are both deeply unhip things from a bygone era. But why be nasty, when Smurfs is actually a wicked little game. I can't remember a Master System platformer with this amount of levels and variety (in truth, I can barely remember any Master System games). Twenty two levels is enough by anyone's standards, and they are not just predictable left-right affairs. Graphics are fine and the sound is chirpier than the 16-bit game. The game plot is wafer-thin and the action shallow, but Smurfs (bar MKII) is the best MS title of the year.







▲ *'Away you go kids': Ron Pickering.*







▲ *More spotted dick in the underground caverns of Smurf.*

RASPBERRY

When Hefty's feeling weary from the rough and tumble of the platforms, a juicy raspberry restores those health bars.

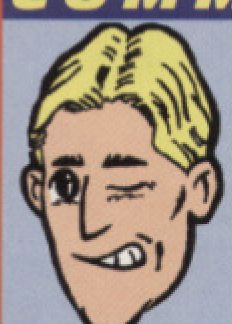


STAR

If you manage to reach all of the stars in a level, then a bonus game is up for grabs. In the bonus game, grab as much as you can within the time limit.



COMMENT



PAUL

Phew! It's been a bit of a drought for the ever-suffering Master System. Okay, so we had Asterix a couple of months ago, but it wasn't anything special. So at long last it's fab to have something really worth playing. Real thought has gone into programming the Smurfs, the levels are reasonably large and varied, but more's to the point, they offer variation in gameplay. One minute you're exploring the collapsing bridge level, the next you're tobogganing across ravines. To add to its worthiness an extremely tough challenge factor has been included – strong enough to challenge even the most experienced gamer. The Master System has its limitations, but here is the evidence that quality can still be achieved

GRAPHICS

▲Bright, colourful, and nicely defined renditions of the Smurfs' adventures.
▼A fair bit of slowdown.

87

SOUND

▲A fine effort considering the Master System's limited capabilities.

88

PLAYABILITY

▲Superb variation coupled with plenty of action.
▼Frustration abounds when struck by an untimely and unnecessary death.

90

LASTABILITY

▲A stiff challenge even on Easy not to mention the stacks of levels.

86

VFM

▲Loads to cover and explore at a cut-price 8 Bit tag.

87

OVERALL

89

An unusual theme, but nonetheless a quality product for a slowing market.

V.R. Virtua Racing DELUXE

1-2 PLAYERS

24 MEG

GAME TYPE
RACING

PRICE £59.99

BY SEGA

RELEASE NOVEMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:N\A
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: EXCELLENT
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
WIN COURSE ONE WITH ALL CARS

ORIGIN
An upgraded translation of the 16-bit conversion of the coin-op.

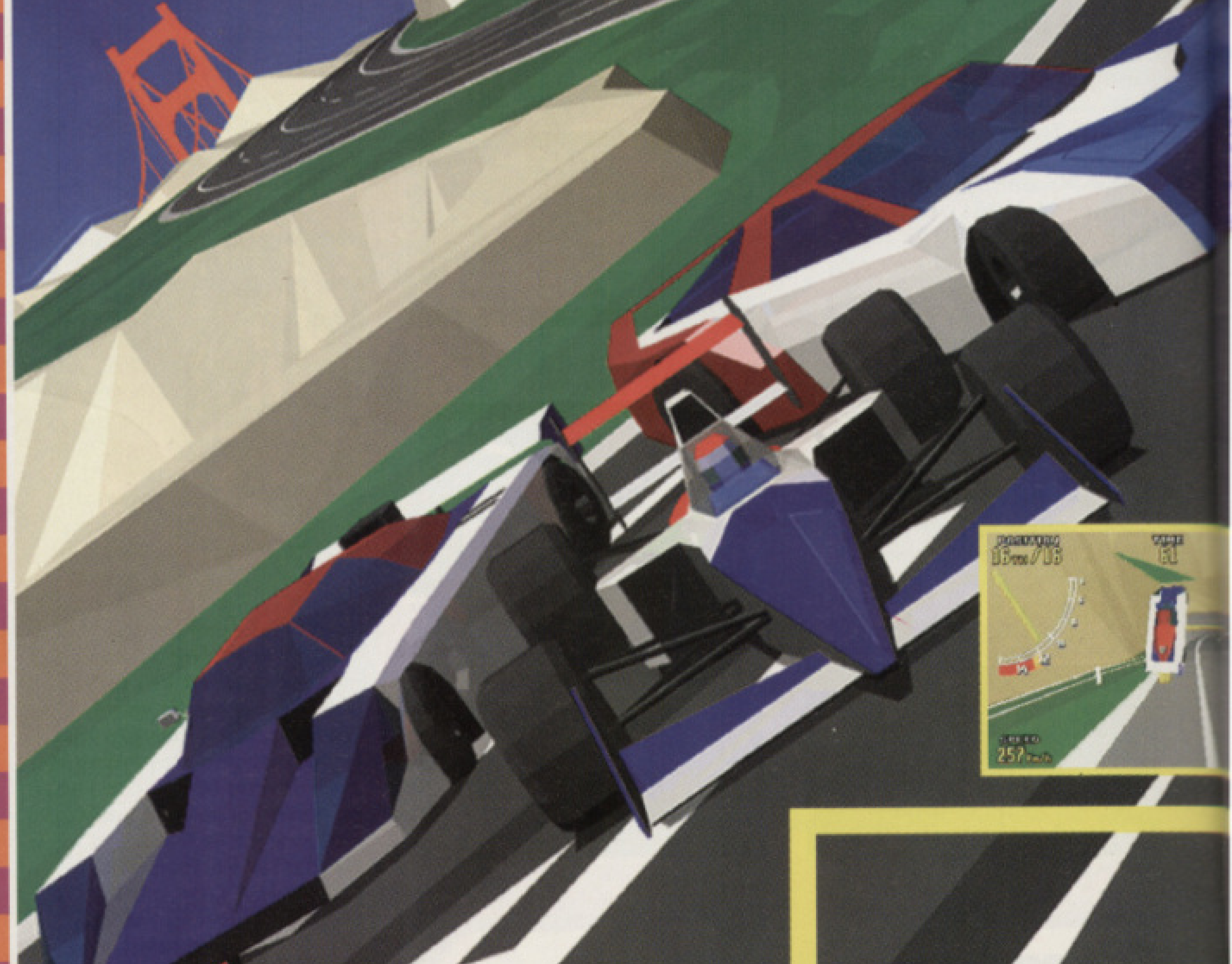
GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY
REFLEXES
CHALLENGE
ACTION
STRATEGY

GAME AIM
It's a car race and your aim is to come first. As if you didn't know.

Cast your mind back three years ago when the computer industry was alive with "buzz words". No buzz word was more powerful at the time than "Virtual Reality". Everyone went on about it, even though few people had actually seen it - and those who had seen it said it was crap.

Well, at the time, Sega jumped onto the bandwagon by starting a series of coin-ops based partly on Virtual Reality. But being the clever chaps that they are, they dispensed with the headache-inducing virtual helms, and instead concentrated on what VR should have been about — perfectly rendered artificial worlds. The result of their labours, Virtua Racing, became an all-time arcade fave, spawning many more Virtua games.

The game was transferred well to the Megadrive, incorporating all of the tracks and plenty of racing action - but there were many complaints - mainly about its price:: seventy of your English pounds sterling. With the advent of the 32X console, original coders AM2 went back into their labs to create the ultimate home conversion of Virtua Racing. Although this is the Deluxe version, the aim is still the same, take your car around different Virtua tracks, burning off the opposition as only you can.



MEGA GAME

HELLO JOHN, GOTTA NEW MOTOR?

So what is all this "Deluxe" business all about then, eh? Well, it means that you now have three different cars to choose from, over the old version's one.

V.R. Virtua Racing DELUXE



▲ "Are we there yet? I need a wee. Please can we stop?"



▲ Little did Tyrone know that Maud had ensured an insurance pay-out...





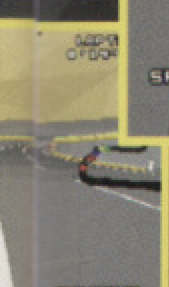






▲ And when I bang the dashboard...



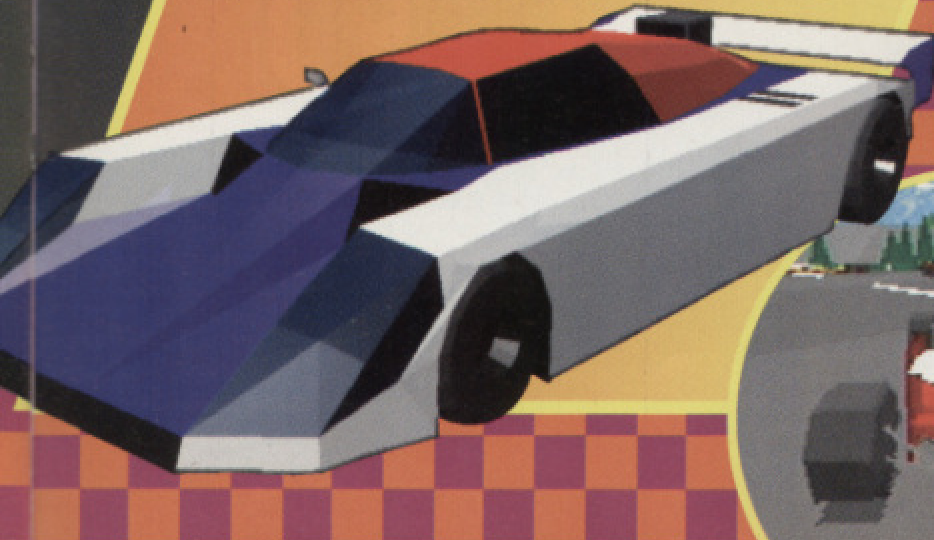


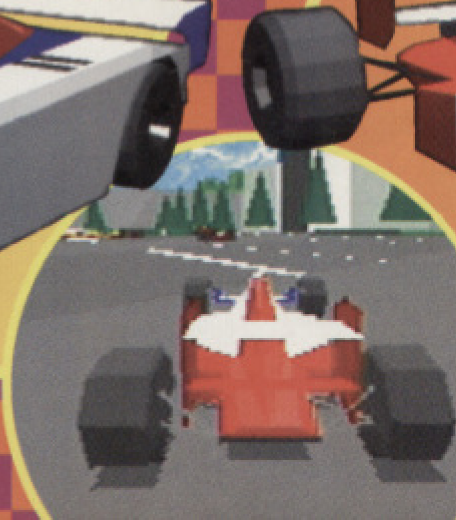
PROTOTYPE

You have to be good. Very good. Or very stupid, if you want to play using this car. It's the fastest car there is by miles (per hour), easily reaching speeds of over 360 km/h. But it looks like a brick and handles like one.

FORMULA 1

With speeds reaching around 330 km/h, there's no doubting the sheer power of the formula one super car. It handles well too, making for the most balanced driving experience in the game.



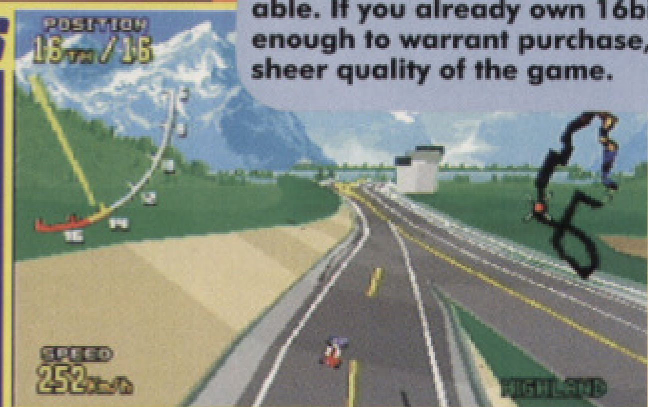




TRACKS OF MY TEARS

Everyone in the universe knows about the three tracks in the arcade version: Big Forest, Bay Bridge and The Acropolis. They're in the 32X conversion as well, looking a lot more detailed and lovely than they do in the 16bit SVP version. But what with being a Deluxe version of VR, the coders have included a couple of tracks that didn't make it into the original arcade game.

HIGHLANDS



The ideal track for the new stock cars. Packed with devastating 90 degree turns, this urban landscape ranks as the most difficult course in VR Deluxe.

SANDPARK

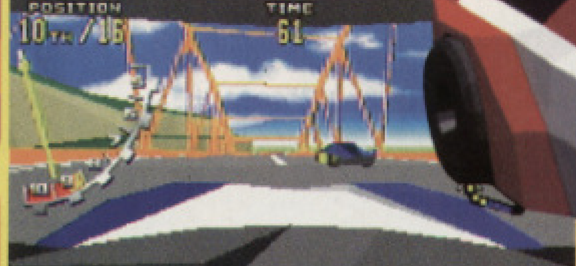


Now then, now then, if you're a proud prototype owner, you might want to check out this course. It's pretty demanding, but the lack of really nasty turns make this a track you can really speed around.



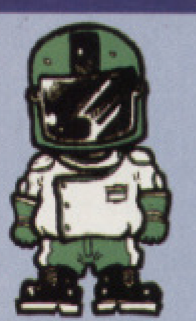
STOCK

Definitely the most enjoyable to play with, but don't expect to break any records with these cars. The top speed of the model doesn't even reach 300 km/h. However, the superb handling of the car makes taking even hair-pin corners a doddle if you know what you're doing.





COMMENT



RICH

I must admit that at first I was disappointed with Virtua Deluxe. Sega had been promising something really close to the coin-op, but the finished game has more in common with the 16bit conversion than the mighty Model One coin-op. After several hours of play, I have changed my mind. AM2 have concentrated on improving the gameplay rather than the graphics and the result is excellent. The lack of lastability which some people criticised the 16-bit version for no longer applies. The five courses are all excellent and the cars are sufficiently different to make the game even more enjoyable. If you already own 16bit Virtua, this might not be quite enough to warrant purchase, but there's no denying the sheer quality of the game.

COMMENT



STEVE

Like Rich I was similarly disappointed after my first few laps of Deluxe. From the screenshots shown here you may also be forgiven for thinking there's no real difference between the 32X and Megadrive games. However, after a while, Deluxe's sheer playability began to filter through, and I gradually got to grips with the new cars and tracks and enjoyed myself more than with the Megadrive cart. Anyone who complained about the 16bit game's lack of variety will be shut up by the new cars and tracks, and fans of the coin-op will be over the moon as they get to grips with a conversion that outplays the original. Another Virtua game comes up trumps, and the 32X's future looks rosier.

GRAPHICS — 92

▲Faster, smoother and more detailed than the Megadrive conversion, and a lot more colourful. Still not quite up to the coin-op though.

SOUND — 83

▲A range of mildly entertaining music along with some excellent sampled effects.
▼The engine noises are a bit lawn-mower-ish though.

PLAYABILITY — 92

▲No faults here. The gameplay is slick, fun and enjoyable with plenty of high-speed action. The new cars and tracks raise interest even further.

LASTABILITY — 90

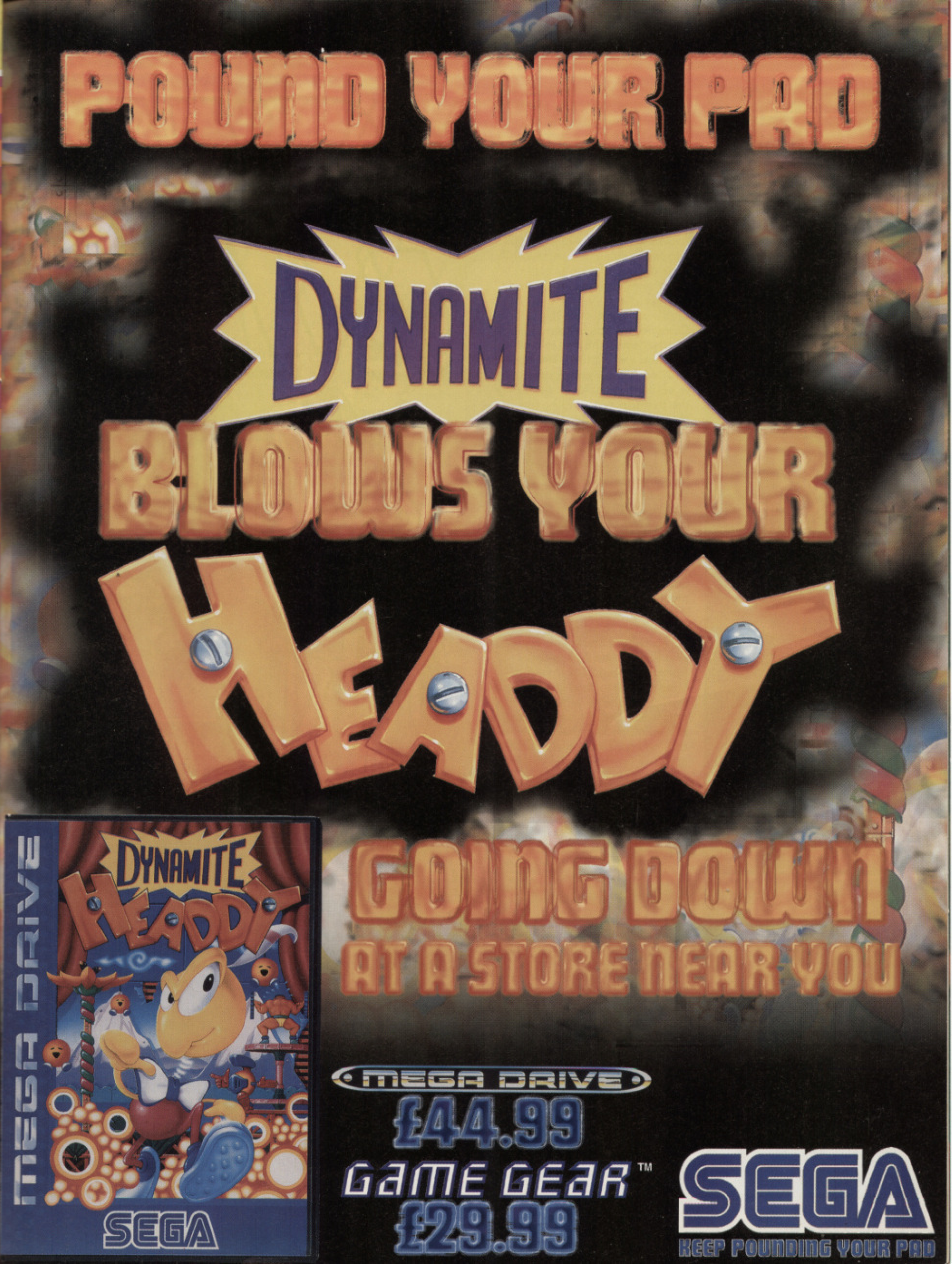
▲The extra tracks coupled with the new cars — and of course the all-powerful two-player mode, make this a game you'll come back to again and again.

VFM — 87

▲Good. Cheaper than the 16-bit version, with a whole lot more game in it.

OVERALL — 90

An extremely decent 32X road racer that's well worth purchase. Can the Virtua series do no wrong?



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KEEP POUNDING YOUR PAD

SNA

SNATCHER

1 PLAYERS

GAME TYPE
ADVENTURE

PRICE	£39.95
BY	KONAMI
RELEASE	TBA

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD\JUSTIFIER
CONTINUES: SAVE GAME
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
25%

ORIGIN

Snatcher is an original menu-driven adventure, that borrows Cyberpunk storylines and styling. A Mega-CD debut.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

The mission becomes clear as you investigate — decipher the mystery of the Snatcher menace.

The 6th of June, 1996 is a date to forever mark one of the most infamous episodes in human history. In a rundown research lab at Chernodon, on the outskirts of Moscow, a mysterious explosion triggers a global biological calamity, which became known simply as 'The Catastrophe'. A viral agent known as 'Lucifer Alpha' seeps into the atmosphere, and annihilates the population across a great swathe of eastern Europe and Eurasia.

50 years on, and The Catastrophe has become just another sorry chapter in man's flirtation with nature. The society of 2046 has problems of its own to contend with, foremost being the hysteria surrounding the menace of Snatchers. The name refers to mysterious robotic life-forms who murder and then assume the identity of their victims, using sophisticated synthesis techniques. Such is the panic and social breakdown following revelations of the Snatchers' methods, that a special bureau 'Junkers' has been conceived to identify and eliminate the Snatcher threat, which is most concentrated in Neo Kobe, a bustling futuristic metropolis built off the coast of Japan.

As Gillian Seed, you are one of a limited band of Junkers operatives, but your investigations are set to take you beyond the 'mundane' events of murder and imposture that are already attributed to Snatchers — to a chilling conspiracy with consequences for the whole world...



▲ *No, really my friend says this is less apinful than tieing it to the door handle and slamming.*



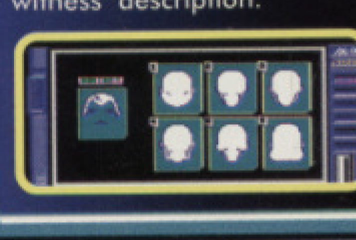






ON-LINE JORDAN

Junkers central computer, Jordan, is something else. Through him you can access a wealth of data on Neo Kobe and its history, culture and politics. Whenever an unfamiliar concept is mentioned, refer to Jordan. He also has data files on all Neo Kobe's registered inhabitants. This is invaluable for tracking down Snatcher suspects, a task which may also be approached by scanning ID files with a digitised facial montage constructed from a witness' description.



TCHER





▲ Ooops!

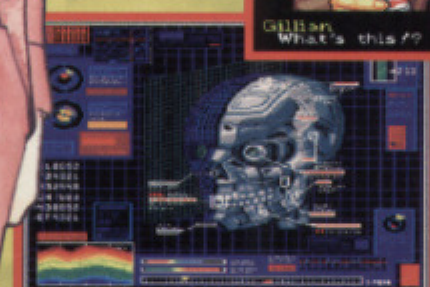




▲ He had an argument with a Bic Orange... and lost.

▼ Cor it's just like a real computer!







GET SOME GEAR

A Junker has three essential tools — his ID card, blaster and Navigator. The last of these quickly proves to be the most important. A navigator is a robotic personal assistant. It carries no weapons, but has a host of useful built-in features. Your navigator is called Metal Gear. Amongst his functions is a videophone through which you can access the entire Neo Kobe directory, a scanner with which to analyse any organic or non-organic compound, a motion sensor and memory bank. Metal Gear also has his own inimitable character and proves to be a lively companion.



JUNKERS HIGH

Located in the vast Konami Omni building, Junkers HQ is a place you will return to time and again for information, research and resources. It is the first place you visit for a brief to your new duties, and houses your office, the Chief, Harry the Engineering operative and Jordan computer system. There is also a shooting range to hone your blaster skills.



DON'T SPARE THE HORSES

For your work, Junkers supplies you with a Turbocycle, a highly versatile, fully automated vehicle. Travelling from place to place in Neo Kobe simply involves selecting from the destination menu. You may know where you want to go, but uncovering the exact location may be necessary before taking the 'cycle there.





COMMENT



GUS

Konami put fluffy forest creatures and platform games aside for once, and the results are highly impressive. Snatcher has one of the most involved storyboards and backgrounds of any video game, and Konami have gone a long way to creating the interactive movie adventure they claim it is (try accessing their videophone number in the game for a full account). Every step of the engrossing adventure is convincing, the dialogue and situations are mostly well-scripted and staged, and the puzzles are often very tricky, though getting used to re-examining things many times may confuse at first. Initially, time is spent laying out the plot which is tedious, but once your colleague is killed there's a lot more freedom to explore and collect evidence. Luckily the game is not linear, but structured enough so you are never left completely high and dry. This compares very favourably with Rise of the Dragon, another 'Cyberpunk' adventure that was far too short. There's more meat to Snatcher, a considerably longer game.

BY HAND AND BRAIN

Snatcher is definitely a brain game. It possesses an incredibly detailed storyline and the plot takes some surprising twists which test your lateral thinking. Much of the game is spent investigating leads and interrogating characters. The presence of Snatchers adds an element of danger, which comes to a head in occasional shoot out sections. For this, Konami have made Snatcher compatible with their Justifier gun, used previously on Lethal Enforcers.



COMMENT



STEVE

Konami turn their hand to the adventure genre and show all the console mastery we have come to expect.

Snatcher is a breath-takingly detailed game which is so full of nice touches and extras that going about your everyday Junker duties becomes as enjoyable as hunting down the Snatcher units. The game makes the most of its CD medium with more digitised (and relevant) speech than we have come to expect, and a series of gritty and detailed locations — with dozens of Konami plugs throughout! There are times when the character interaction gets a tad annoying — the plot development when your robot mate keeps on about your personal life grates — but the detective work is so engrossing I found myself hunting high and low for clues. My only other gripe is that evidence should be easier to take rather than investigating AND looking at it, but apart from that I rate Snatcher as one of my top three Mega-CD games of all-time.



▼ The new compu-desk 5000. Essential for the modern office.



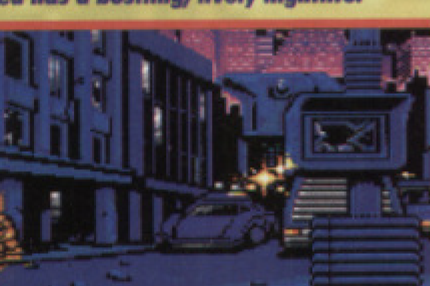


▼ Put them away, luv (Sweeney captions inc.)



▲ Exploitation or what?

▼ The area has a bustling, lively nightlife.



GRAPHICS

85

▲The vast storage capacity of CD is used for a massive collection of cartoon vignettes — animated and still, and very stylishly presented.

SOUND

91

▲The music changes constantly, with some excellent John Carpenter-style incidental themes, and othersuch moody tunes for effect. There is copious dialogue, and the acting is adequate.

PLAYABILITY

86

▲The range of menu commands is straightforward, but the game frequently tests your analytical powers. Ingenuity in plot design and puzzles.

LASTABILITY

80

▲Bigger, tougher and more complex than comparable adventures, and with a compulsive quality to it.
▼Saving games is essential, but shortens the game's life.

VFM

84

▲ Three large acts and at the lower end of the Mega-CD price scale.
▼Interactive movies compare unfavourably with standard movies on price.

OVERALL

85

X-rated and highly rated, Snatcher provides a welcome adventure for Mega-CD owners in long trousers. Feeling lucky, cyberpunk?



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1 PLAYERS

24 MEG

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	£59.99
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	DECEMBER

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: 5
RESPONSIVENESS: LIGHTNING
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
LEVEL 8

ORIGIN

Created and converted by Id software whose 3D killer shenanigans commenced with Wolfenstein.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Take out all enemy lifeforms, space cadet. Kill, kill them all!

MEGA GAME

You don't hear anything. Just the sound of your panting breath. It is your panting breath, isn't it? You don't see much. It's a dark corridor, with stuttering flashes of neon light, cast from recesses above. The base is in a state of ongoing disrepair. No one to change the lightbulbs you see. They've all been eaten.

Now you know that something else is close by. There's something else besides the pounding of your own heart — something else's hunger. How fortunate that you're carrying a shotgun. Of course, you'd prefer it to be a pulse blaster, but in the circumstances you feel it would be ungrateful to complain. Anyway, you just found a box of cartridges, so if you're going then quite a few are going with you. How did the Mars base get into this mess? From the carnage you see it seems to be a place in the pit of Hell, not the depths of space. Flitting thoughts of tortured corpses makes the hairs stand out on your neck. And in that area of your body you are suddenly aware of a pleasant sensation, like the slow, gentle stroke of a long, sharp fingernail...







▼ *Young man! At your age! At our age! Young man!*



▲ *Mr Demon, you may be king of Doom. But if you were to come round my house and kick the cat. NO! Mr Demon...*

NATURAL BORN KILLERS

Of the initial excursions provided for 32X buyers, Doom is a white-knuckle rollercoaster ride of a game. You start with a flimsy pistol and a few rounds, and the imperative of reaching an exit located on each of the seventeen 3D levels any of the first fifteen can be accessed from the options screen, but the latter two await anyone who ploughs through from start to finish. Your view is first-person perspective, and you'll soon discover it's possible to spin round sharply, edge forward or plough on. Though the game appears as unsophisticated carnage to the uninitiated, real Doom-ers learn tactics the hard way pacing the levels, laying ambushes, finding sheltered positions, memorising the mazes. Only then will you be ready to tackle the next of five difficulty levels.



FORGOTTEN CORRIDORS

Secrets abound in Doom, many of them so innocuous as to be missed on your initial panic-stricken progress. But search out suspicious landscape features and you come across short-cuts, stashes of ammo and energy and new weapons. One dubious 'improvement' on the PC version is the more conspicuous marking of some of these areas.







▲ *Pwoar! Who let that one go! Doom's hidden weapon: the lit fart.*







A FAREWELL TO ARMS

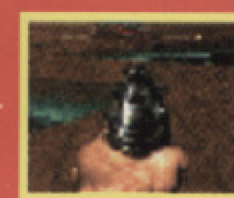
The creatures you will encounter won't be pacified with tea and a visit from their social worker. Death is the only decent therapy. To offer this service you require the right tools. Never blame them:

FIST



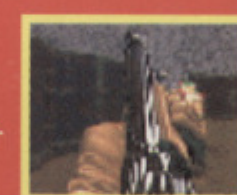
It might feel good to contact physically, but the bigger demons are not going to be convinced.

PISTOL



Fast loading is about all that can be said for this. Easy to aim but low-powered ammo.

SHOTGUN



There's a worrisome pause as the gun reloads, but this is a worthy mainstay weapon. Fabulously satisfying recoil.

CANNON



A rather preposterous little toy to be carrying around, but when firepower comes like this who cares if you feel a prat. Ammo is scarce, however.

PULSE RIFLE



Smokin'! The crackle of electromagnetic discharge accompanies the smell of enemies frying like pop tarts in the Depths of Hell.

CHAINSAW



The only one for sickos and Tobe Hooper devotees. The lack of range is more than offset with the manic enjoyment of letting rip on a horde of aliens. Shall I carve?





▲ *Shotgun wound? Suits you sir. Large portion was it...*

FORBIDDEN PORTALS

As you rush headlong, always keep the comforting orange glow of the exit door in your mind. Some may not be as easy to find as you'd hoped. Most blast doors will open easily (what lurks behind) but some are key coded and force you on a detour. Switches operate hidden passages and even some exits may not be all that they appear.



SMOKING HEELS

Some ground areas are flooded with hazardous residue. Cross them and you can feel your life ebbing away. However, armour provides effective though short-lived protection from these effects. Beware the many drums of volatile chemicals littered around, liable to explode with a single shot. An effect which even has some uses...



COMMENT



STEVE

Yes, it may only have seventeen stages, and yes the game window is a little smaller, but you can never take Doom's sheer playability away from it. Never before has a game conjured such an oppressive atmosphere. As the player bounds across a series of detailed corridors and stairways, there's never any way of knowing what's coming around the corner, and this adds a feeling of tension you won't encounter for quite a while. The basic premise of the game — ie. shooting and chopping up a host of demons — is simple enough, but it is Doom's execution that makes it excel. The 3D is simply stunning, the graphics varied and suitably murky, and the action is unrelenting. A stunning game, Doom really puts the 32X through its paces.

THE ONE TRUE WAY

As the levels grow, using the map becomes essential. The blueprint image yields all sorts of important information, and even relays your current position when moving.







COMMENT



GUS

The true test of the 32X is whether is offers gameplay and game spectacle beyond that which the Megadrive can. Despite its minor faults, Doom is an undeniable endorsement of that very principle. It's a magmificent concept in game and brilliant in its execution. Atmosphere by the bucketload, created by the amazing solidity of the graphics, and the sensory tingle of the sampled sound — suggestive of horror like all the best horror movies. That's what Doom is — more of an interactive horror movie than the likes of Night Trap and Mystery Mansion could ever be, because it recreates the sensations of excitement and exhiliration that a well paced slasher flick bring out. When did a video game last do that for you? This is the title you will miss not having the most this Christmas — unless of course you do as we say.

GRAPHICS 93

▲ Dingy corridors packed with detail — and some of the most imaginative monsters you're likely to see.

SOUND 90

▲ Perfect. As you run about you can hear your on-screen character panting, and the assorted weapon and monster effects are incredible.

PLAYABILITY 94

▲ Fast-moving, with a tactical element. Id have married a shoot 'em up with a tactical challenge, and the result is nothing short of a classic.

LASTABILITY 92

▲ It'll take ages to plough through to the final two stages. ▼ Surely a few more stages could have been squeezed in?

VFM 92

▲ The price has yet to be determined, but make sure this is one of the games you redeem your money-off vouchers with.

OVERALL 92

Forget Zero Tolerance, forget Bloodshot. The ultimate 3D shoot 'em up has arrived. The Megadrive will never be the same again...

GRAB





YOUR

It's cold. It's really really cold.
And you know what? It's going to get colder.
The whole world is being cocooned in ice and snow by the Yeti - a gruesome beast with an icicle for a heart and quite appallingly bad breath. His plan is to create and rule a new frozen kingdom here on earth.
Thankfully, Mr. Nutz, SuperSquirrel, is about to turn up the heat. Only he can prevent a new and permanent ice age.
To help him on his way he's got a lotta Nutz, a lotta gutz and one enormous tail.
The temperature's dropping but the heat is most definitely on.



NUTZ



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1 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE TBA

BY SEGA

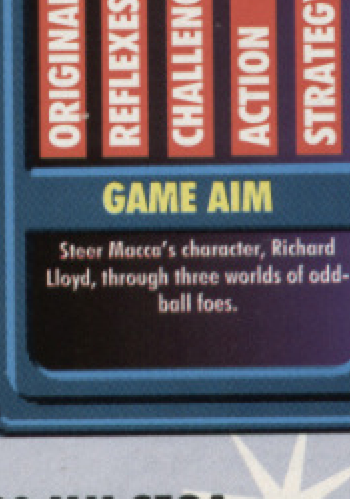
RELEASE NOVEMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: INFINTE
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: FINE
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
Complete Horror World.

ORIGIN
Set within the cartoon domain invaded by Macauley Culkin in Fox's soon-to-be-released mixture of animation and live-action.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Steer Macca's character, Richard Lloyd, through three worlds of odd-ball foes.

Page

Having been banned from the UK's cinema screens due to the dodgy nature of 'The Good Son', Macauley Culkin has returned to front 20th Century Fox's animated attempt to steal the Disney crown: The Pagemaster. Macca stars as a cowering kid, Richard Tyler, who finds menace everywhere and, whilst seeking shelter from a storm in a nearby library, accidentally knocks himself out — only to wake up in a cartoon landscape split into three distinct areas

Sega's binary interpretation of Richard's adventures are set across the said three areas, with the player guiding Richard through the platform-riddled play area in search of pieces of library ticket which he can use to open a portal back to the real world. As the game mirrors the film, along the way Richard encounters numerous characters lifted from nursery rhymes and popular tales, but he's going to have to be a lot braver than normal if he's to make it back home...







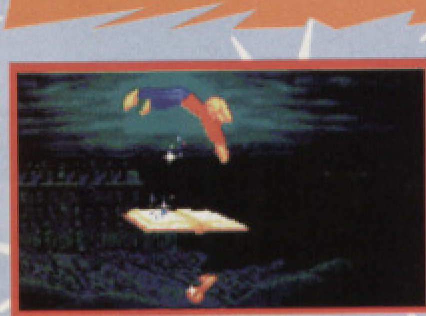
THE WHOLE WORLD'S A PAGE

Richard begins his quest in Horror World, where his foes include ghosts, Mr Hyde (of Jekyll and Hyde fame), and rampant books. Each world is shown within the pages of a scrolling book and is made up of three different backdrops — graveyards and pirate ships, for example. When a level has been completed, Richard can move across to the next until he reaches the exit to the right of the book. Following his exploits with all things scary, Richard then moves on to Fantasy World where he meets a sassy fairy (played in the film by Whoopi Goldberg), before moving on to Adventure land. In all, Pagemaster contains thirty-six levels.







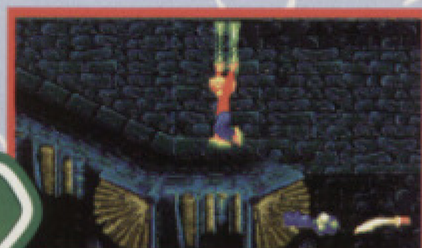




USED GOODS

Richard starts the game with a meagre four lives and any direct contact with the game's many monsters kills him instantly. However, in time-honoured platformer tradition, jumping on his foes dispatches them and there are numerous power-ups for our lank-fringed hero to collect. First of all, there's a pair of shoes which speed him up and allow him to jump off walls, glue sticks to Rich's hands and allows him to bypass spiked floors, whilst golden head icons indicate an extra life. Similarly, each level boasts a weapon of some sort, ranging from a bag of marbles to a large, pointy sword.







Master

COMMENT



STEVE

If you were to list the various aspect of Pagemaster on paper, Sega would have the ultimate platform game. It has cute sprites, plentiful and colourful backdrops, power-ups galore and a neat 3D section. However, when compared with the likes of Mr Nutz and its nippy gameplay and Boogerman and its novel twist, Pagemaster just doesn't seem that inspiring. It doesn't actually do anything wrong — although there are times when you lose a life needlessly — but Pagemaster has a real 'been there, done that before' feel to it. I really like the bare bones of the game, but it lacks pace and the aforementioned playability fault makes it occasionally rather annoying to play. A year or so ago this would have been an 80% plus game, but compared to recent releases it's looking a little tired.



FAST READER

When Richard makes it to the right-hand side of his current adventure, it's time for the plucky youngster to head for the next book — via a rather smart 3D subgame. Seated on a magical flying book, young Master Tyler hurtles towards his target whilst simultaneously avoiding hitting the assorted struts and obstacles which are pepper the way. Conversely, though, a brave player can also go out of their way to collect extra coins and bonuses, closing the pages of the book slightly to squeeze through the tighter gaps.





COMMENT



GUS

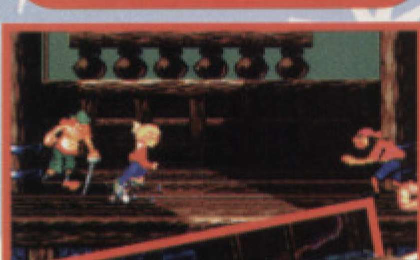
My immunity to platform games must be vanishing, as once again I found myself heartily enjoying a standard example of the genre (even after last month's overkill). It's true that Pagemaster is almost devoid of any original features, but it redresses the balance with a wealth of levels, very accomplished graphics and a good gameplay feel, that indicate the the standard of the average platform game is indeed on the up. Pagemaster also likes to tread dangerously close to the dividing line of challenge and frustration — enemies re-appearing at close range, 'unnatural' death syndrome and oversensitive control all rear their head in places, but at its just about acceptable given the game's pace and overall difficulty. I wouldn't expect anyone to be wildly enthusiastic about Pagemaster (let's just see how the film turns out), but if you get to play it, you're unlikely to feel conned. Basically, what you see is very much what you get.

PICK UP JOINT

Richard's a versatile little fella, and alongside his jumping and throwing skills he can also pick up and make use of any objects he finds. For the most part these are lying around the play area and can be anything from a freshly-cracked Humpty Dumpty to a luminous orange skull. Pressing the B button makes our diminutive hero pick the object up and it can be either dropped or thrown so Richard can stand on it to reach highly-placed bonuses. Similarly, access points to hidden caches of bonuses can be uncovered using these objects.











▼ The hidden dangers of lighting your farts revealed.



GRAPHICS 85

▲ Plenty of variety and well animated and plentiful sprites. Captures the look of the film perfectly.

SOUND 81

▲ The music perfectly suits each level, with the horror level deserving special praise.
▼ The effects are a little weak.

PLAYABILITY 76

▲ Familiar stuff, but as playable as any other.
▼ Loss of objects is often unavoidable. The enemies are annoyingly repositioned unless killed.

LASTABILITY 73

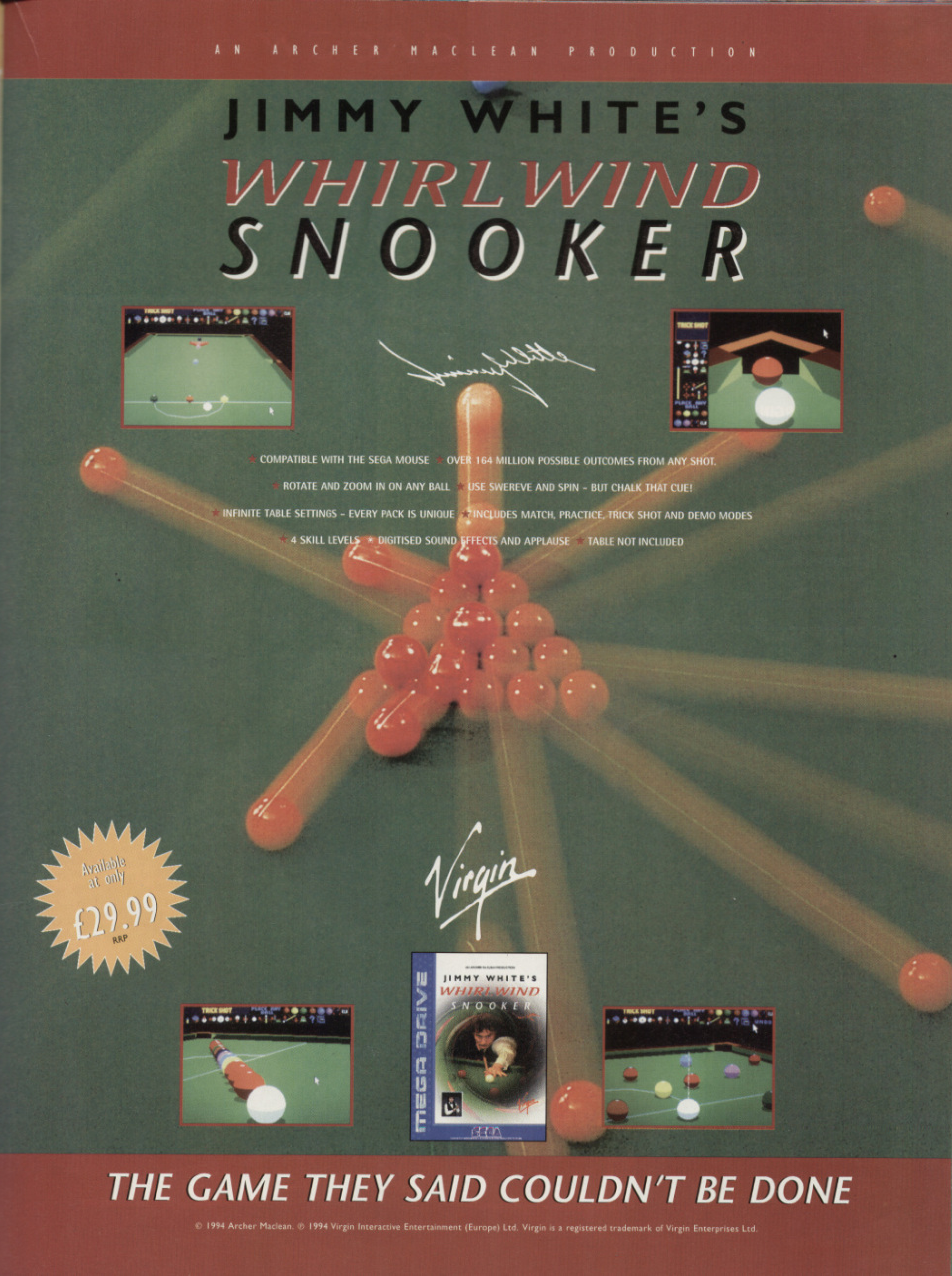
▲ Thirty-six stages in all, plus loads of hidden sub-levels.
▼ Lacks that key addictive quality, the action often ambling along.

VFM 70

▲ A quality platformer...
▼ But so are Mr Nutz, Boogerman, Lion King, etc, etc...

OVERALL 74

Looks good, plenty of variety, large play area. However, Pagemaster just doesn't play as well as it looks, and is destined to be swamped by the other platformers we've seen.


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CANNON FODDER

1 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE	£44.99
BY	VIRGIN
RELEASE	DECEMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS:GOOD
GAMF DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
LEVEL 5

ORIGIN
Developed by Sensible Software on the Amiga, and converted in its entirety to the Megadrive — the inspiration is war itself.

GAME BREAKDOWN
ORIGINALITY
REFLEXES
CHALLENGE
ACTION
STRATEGY

GAME AIM
Clear each stage of enemy troops and their equipment using your team of eager recruits.

Dear Mum,

Thanks for the clean underwear. And the shortbread. We've been stuck out on maneouvres for the last two weeks in Farringdon, and I don't think I could wash my 'Y's in a mucky puddle again. When I joined the Queen's Own Sensiblers I thought this was going to be character building. Well, I suppose killing people is a conversation piece at a dinner party. That's if you can get used to eating with cutlery again. Sergeant Jops pushes us very hard, but I like to think he's firm but fair. After all, I've just got a promotion — footstool in the Officers' Mess. No more mopping out the latrines for me, the rest of the lads are dead envious. I'll write to you again next week. Unless I get killed that is. Don't worry, I'm feeling lucky!
Lots of love, Tommy Atkins.



CAN
FOD

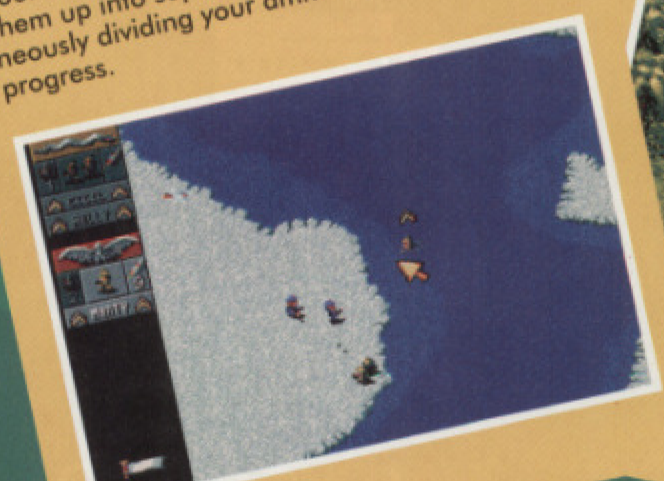






FIRING SQUADDIES

Right, look lively! Getting this shower into shape shouldn't be trouble for officer material like yourself. There are two basic commands in the army — move and fire. Point the cursor to where you want the men to go and they'll follow their lead officer — the most experienced one. While they're on the move, you can get them to spray fire in any surrounding direction. Later on you might want to give your men some responsibility, by splitting them up into separate guerrilla units, simultaneously dividing your ammo and tactics to progress.



COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Dear Mrs Atkins: I regret to inform you that your son has been killed on active duty. The incident occured during a sustained attack when the unfortunate chap was struck by a flying roof. There is a tendency for enemy structures to explode under fire, and roofs and doors take a constant toll on our men. Rest assured, he suffered no enduring pain, unlike the enemy, who writhe about in agony for quite some time when shot.





NNON ODDER

WE WANT YOU FOR A NEW RECRUIT!

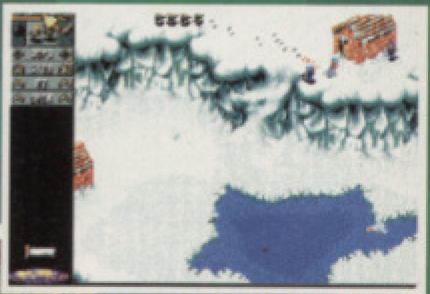
Come join the army — it's a great life! There's always plenty of opportunities, just come queue at our recruiting office over the hill. We select between two and five young rookies per mission. Each starts without rank, but the longer you last the more stripes you'll have down your arm. After each campaign, a new set of men seeking adventure arrive to swell the ranks, which is just as well, because without men we have to wave the white flag.



The crack team penetrate the intense chicken wire defences.



Quick, back into the sauna before the Germans steal all the benches.





COMMENT



STEVE

This is quite simply the most fun you're going to have with your Megadrive in ages. Cannon Fodder is one of the most original games I have ever played, yet for all its new ideas it never bogs itself down with over complex controls or especially deep strategy. Yes, special tactics are needed to defeat the assortment of grenade and rocket-wielding enemy troops, but such is the simplicity of Cannon Fodder that they are pulled off with very little thought. Every aspect of the game excels: the graphics are small but full of Sensi's oddball humour (watch out for the exploding sheep!), and the sound effects are equally hot. In all, Cannon Fodder is one of the best games to emerge from Virgin HQ. It's original, playable, and has enough levels to kéep avid players yomping for ages. Enrol today.

GRENADIER GUARDS

Dear Mum,
Today I learned how to use a rocket launcher. Sometimes they are just lying around, so I couldn't resist taking a pot shot at a Nissan hut. Our pop guns aren't much good at taking out those things, but a few fireworks or a couple of grenades is enough to do the trick. Pity the enemy are starting to shoulder a few of their own, though.



TERRITORIAL ARMY

Getting to grips with the ground is an essential for success and a (reasonably) long life. Learn the effects of the following:

SHALLOW WATER
You can still fire without impediment, but you are slower.



DEEP WATER
Can be crossed, but leaves you exposed to enemy fire.



QUICKSAND
Watch out for this, Many of our boys have sunk without trace.



JUNGLE
Impenetrable and shields you from fire, but rockets and grenades can rebound.



ICE
Going AOT is a constant problem on the arctic levels. Steady as she goes.



TRAPS
Look out for sinister markings in the undergrowth. The enemy have set snares.



LANDSLIPS
It's safe enough to drop down rock walls, but these passes are the only way back up.



COMMENT



GUS

What an absolute gem of a game. Cannon Fodder is one of the most original game concepts in years, and so perfectly implemented as to be a pleasure from the first moment, and still pose a challenge weeks later. The unique nature of the game is the way reflexes and strategy are mixed. Although success is entirely dependent on your sharp wits, it quickly becomes essential to tackle the levels with a firm strategy. However, to keep things sharp, things often take an unpredictable turn, and your making command decisions in split seconds. It really feels like handling an army unit, but with the hallmark humour of all Sensible games, and the attention to game feel and control that have made their previous classics. The presentation is accomplished, though neither the graphics or sound would make you stop short. But pick up Cannon Fodder for five minutes, and you'll acknowledge that you're in the presence of true gaming genius.

GRAPHICS
77

▲ Crisp backdrops and clear layouts with exceptionally smooth scrolling and sensible colour schemes.
▼ Everything is nit-sized.

SOUND
79

▲ Great agony samples when the enemy take a dive. Nice gun noises.
▼ Not so sure on the 'Ace of Base' title music. Happy Nation, lads?

PLAYABILITY
94

▲ Even Mother Theresa would be working out new ways to progress Utterly compelling.
▼ The game kicks in a little too suddenly after a few missions.

LASTABILITY
90

▲ Loads of sub missions, and the later stages take ages to work out. New elements are introduced gradually to keep your attention.

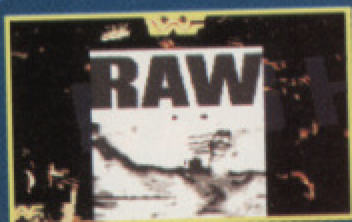
VFM
89

▲ When what you want is game, Cannon Fodder offers it in abundance.
▼ It was once a disk game, and a darn sight cheaper.

OVERALL
93

Cannon Fodder — patron saint of wargames. This is where the smart money will be going for getting the most out of your Megadrive.


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1-4 PLAYERS

16 MEG

GAME TYPE
SPORT

PRICE £44.95

BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE NOVEMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: INFINITE
SKILL LEVELS: 1-10
RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE

1ST DAY SCORE
N/A

ORIGIN
The sequel to last year's WWF Royal Rumble also based on the US's glitzy wrestling antics.

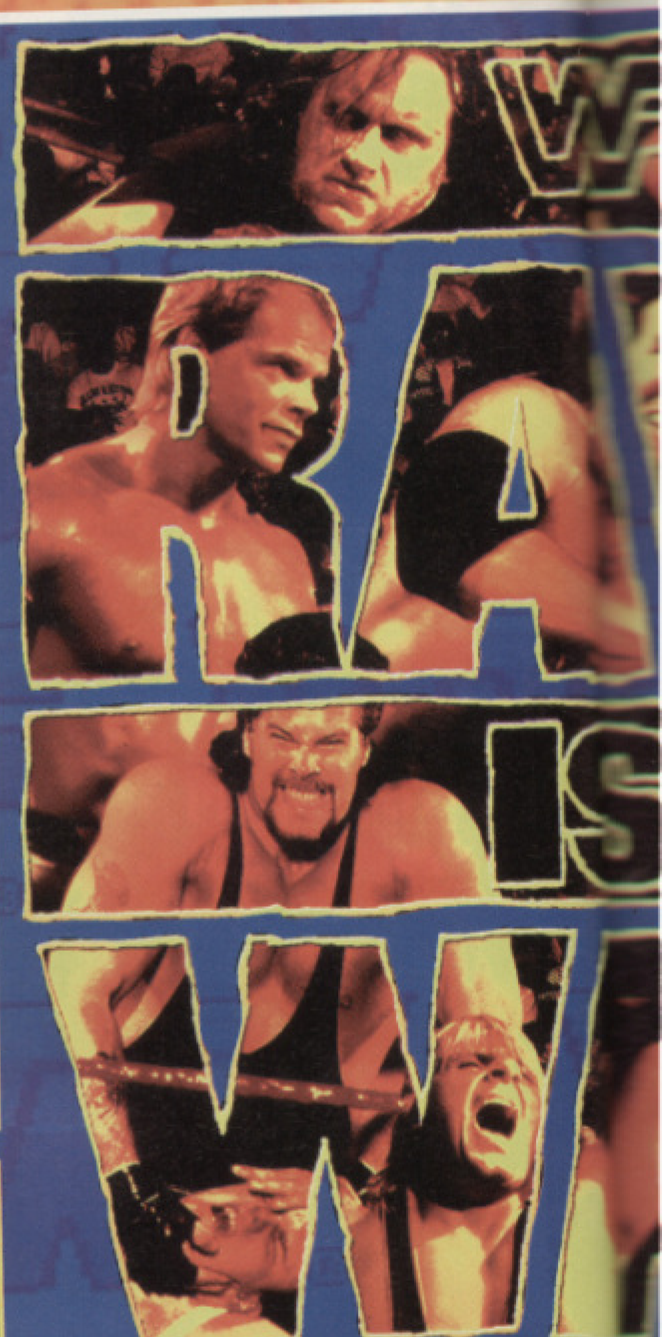
GAME BREAKDOWN



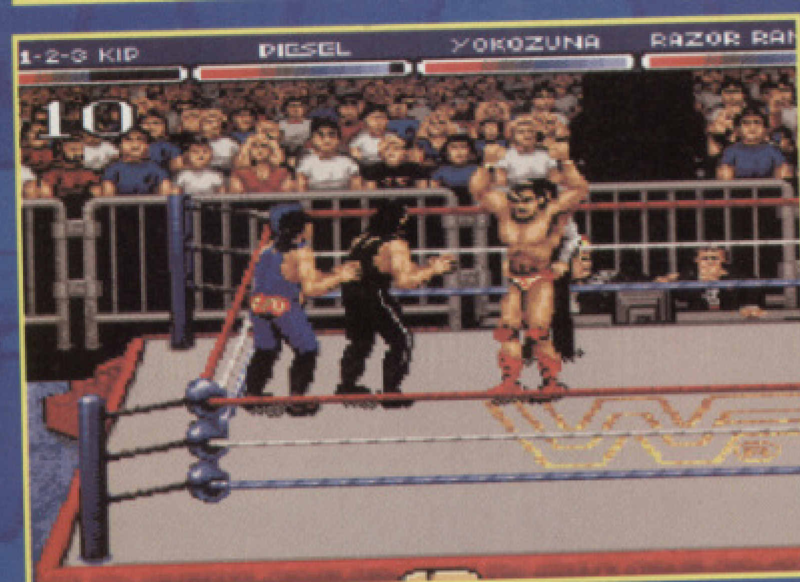
GAME AIM
Battle with the mighty WWF stars to become champion of the world.

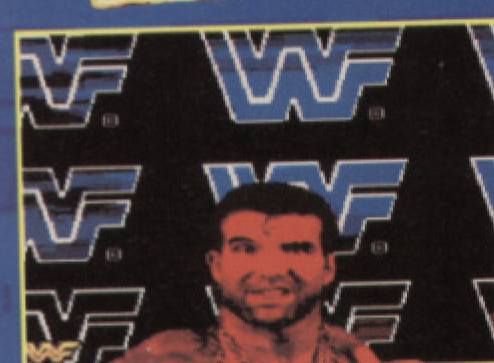
What better way to spend your Monday evening than watching a bunch of over-sized men and women in tight lycra wrestle it out in the ring? They're back on the Megadrive and they're bigger than ever, in this 24MEG all-wrestling action extravaganza! You guessed it, the WWF guys and gal are ready to perform their dramatic feats of daring and athleticism in comfort of your very own home.

From the thirty-odd current WWF combatants, twelve of the meanest and leanest have been selected to get to grips (and grapples) in events covering the week-to-week bouts, to a selection of the more spectacular championships. Each character brings with them the specific fighting style of their human counterpart including moves and even special moves. So in anticipation of grinding, grappling, and gurgling, it's over to our commentators for the lowdown on the showdown.





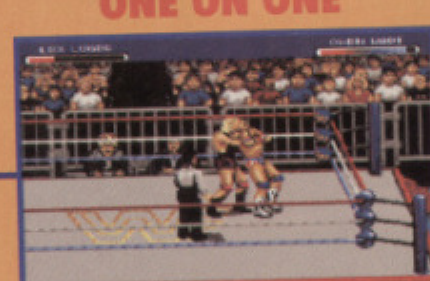




RING A RING

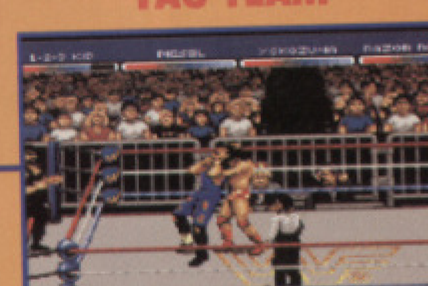
Our WWF boys and girl have a whole host of match options for you to select and play at your leisure. Shall we take a peek?

ONE ON ONE

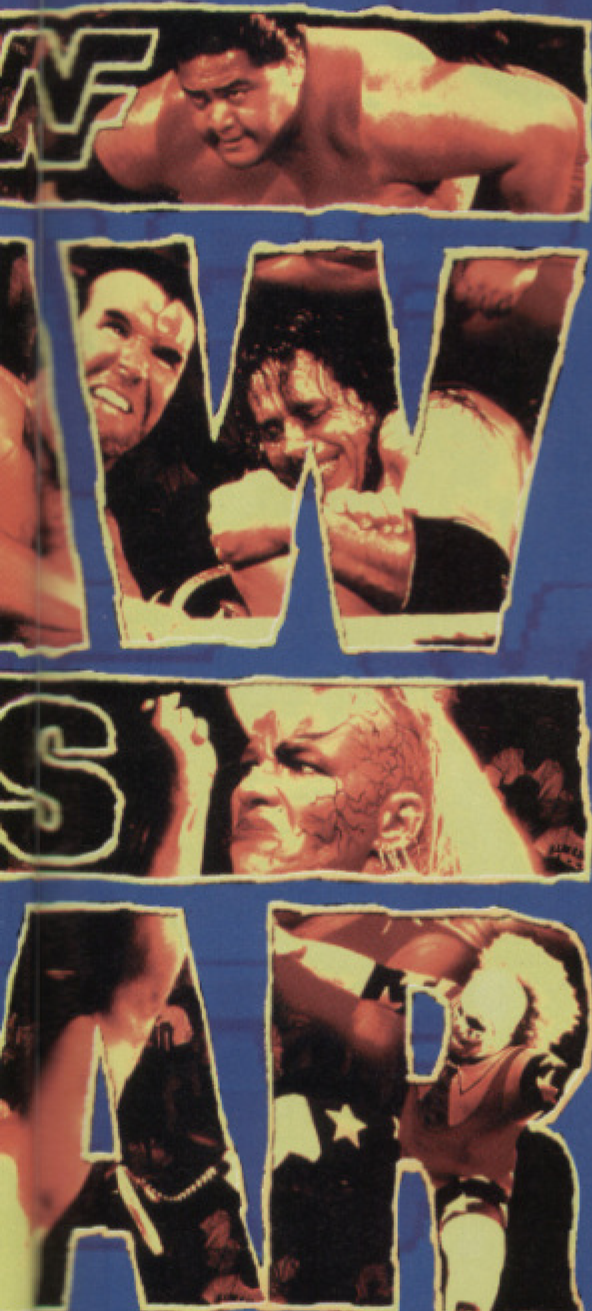


Your regular Monday evening battle of the giants. All brute action and none of that fancy business.

TAG TEAM



For a bit of support, select a tag partner. Illegal entry into the ring by an untagged partner is measured with a timer, and exceeding the limit results in a penalty.



RAW BEEF

There's only so many times you can play as the Undertaker, so the unofficiated and the stats nutters now have an Ability Guide detailing who's who and what they can do. The character selection screen is not just a collection of pretty faces, as with a flick of a button you can analyse a character's speed, strength, stamina, and weight. These screens are particularly useful when considering the various match-up options.



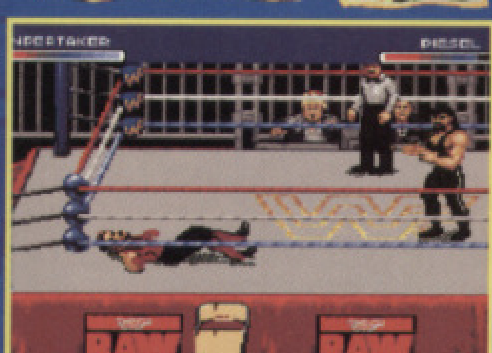
▲ *Nice to see you, nice! Welcome to the Generation game.*

▼ *Now over to Miss Ford for the scores on the board.*



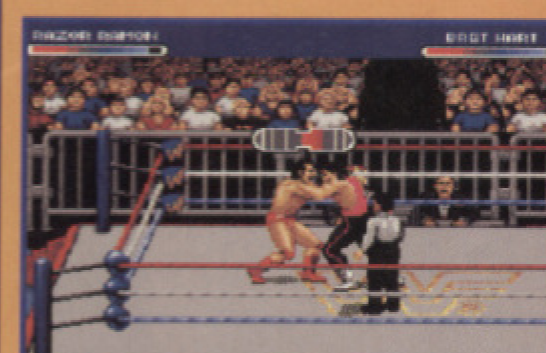






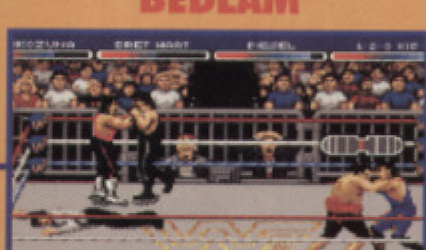
LOCK-UP

Not a dodgy garage where stolen motors are resprayed, but one of the wrestler's tools of the trade. When confronted by your opposition it is essential to gain the advantage by pulling off the move first. Be warned, though, as a mistimed lock up can result in overbalancing and putting your foe ahead of the game. Once in the lock up position it's a question of endurance and brute strength to keep the power flowing (via continual pressing of the B button) and lift the loser into a special move and slam 'em on to the canvas.



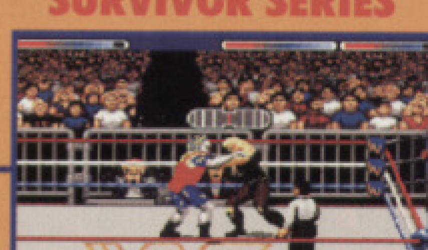
▲ *"No you are!", "No, no, you are!"*

BEDLAM



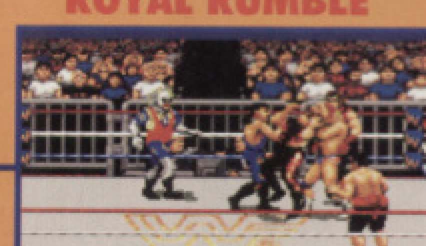
Single-handedly take on two opponents. Pin either down to eliminate them from the ring.

SURVIVOR SERIES



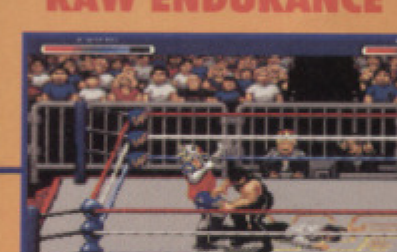
A chaotic four-on-four extended tag team event. But don't get too chummy with your partners as the last one standing is the winner.

ROYAL RUMBLE

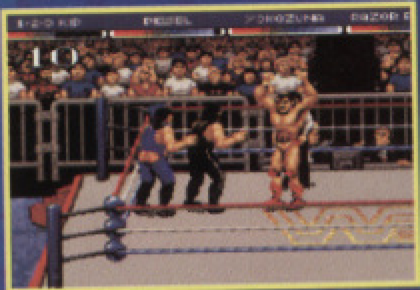


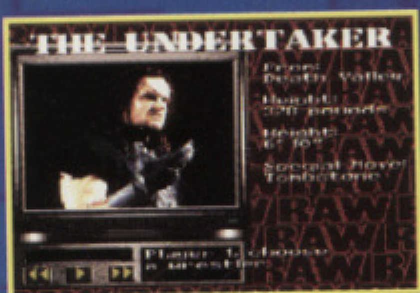
Kicks off with two wrestlers in the ring, after which other competitors enter at regular intervals. Throw your opponents out of the ring to eliminate them.

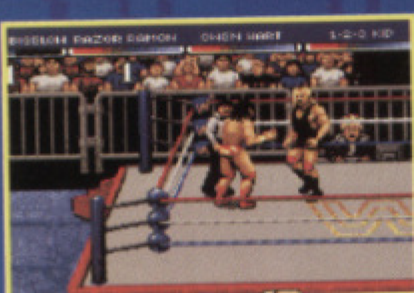
RAW ENDURANCE

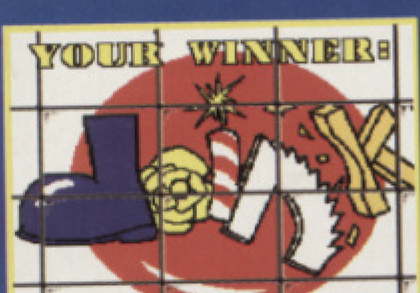


The ultimate six on six battle of the brawn. Pin an opponent down and the next team member leaps in giving the victor no time to compose himself for the next round.









▲ *The comedy japester comes up with the goods.*

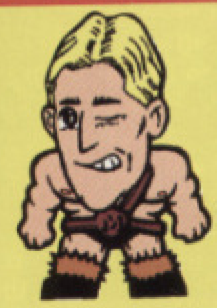
BUCKET AND SPADE

In keeping with the true sense of the TV series you can jump in and out of the ring as much as you want. Once outside the ring with your opponent in tow, a timer is initiated giving you up to ten seconds of extra-ringular activities before the plug is pulled on the action. What's more, the bucket and chair have also been left in convenient positions for you to grab and swing at your leisure.



▲ *The musical chairs gets nasty.*

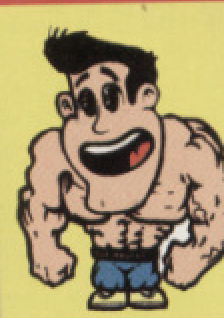
COMMENT



PAUL

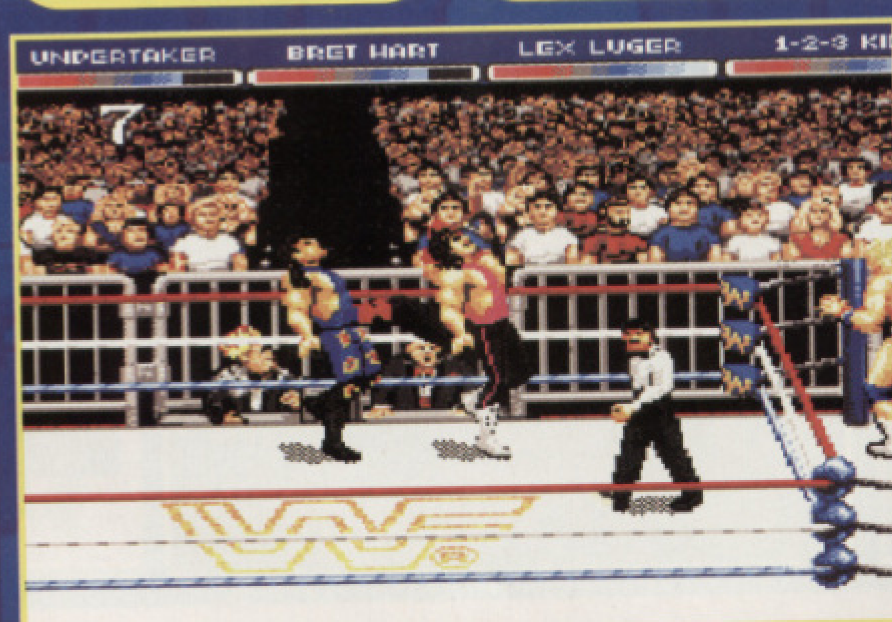
Come to think about it, 'Raw' just about sums up this shoddy game. The visuals are quite simply appalling, relying on the WWF license to add padding with the many presentation screens. The actual wrestler sprites are ill-defined and extremely badly animated, demonstrating no real evidence of creative thought during design stages. As for the gameplay, well excuse me, but I was under the impression that hitting a button as fast as you can went out with the likes of Track and Field! Admittedly the four player option does lead to a few laughs, but quite honestly this is a bit of a shambles and one most definitely to be avoided.

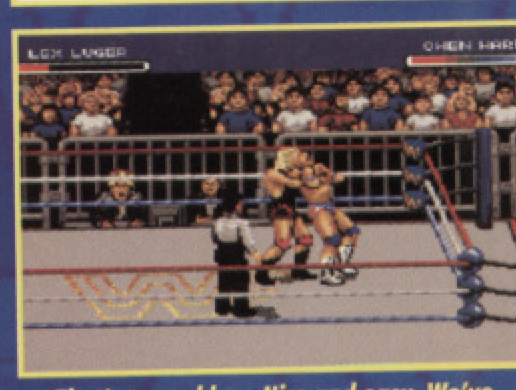
COMMENT



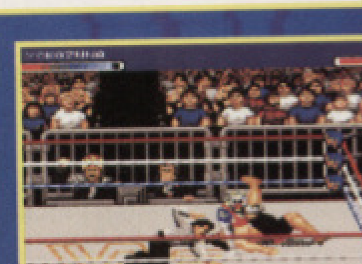
STEVE

WWF Wrestling is popular because of the OTT characters and the hype surrounding each fight. As such, any game based on it has to be equally brash with loads of atmospheric sounds during the bouts and more fancy moves than Top Of The Pops. Sadly, WWF Raw is a pale imitation of the spectacle it is based on, with limp sprites ambling across a ring using a series of confused moves to throw each other around and pin opponents to the floor. This is hardly the stuff playable games are based on, and the result is a pedestrian beat 'em up which lurches from round to round. Even the addition of a number of play modes can't save this.





▲ *That's a good boy. Nice and easy. We've got a lovely white cell full of fluffy cushions, just for you.*





GRAPHICS 61

▲ Nice wrestler presentation.
▼ Very sluggish and clumsy with indistinguishable character sprites.

SOUND 68

▲ Individual theme tunes and the normal selection of whacks and thwacks.
▼ All a bit squeaky and muffled.

PLAYABILITY 59

▲ Reasonably entertaining in the four player mode.
▼ But, on the whole, more laughable than laudable with its slow and frustrating gameplay.

LASTABILITY 57

▼ Rapid button presses and the occasional special move do not amount to an interesting game.

VFM 55

▼ 24MEG, but not enough game to warrant the additional memory.

OVERALL 58

The WWF series needs a dramatic rethink. Raw looks dated, is sluggish to play and is a real non event in the realm of video violence.


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PITFALL
THE MAYAN ADVENTURE



1 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

PRICE £44.95

BY ACTIVISION/SONY

RELEASE NOVEMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES:3
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
COMPLETE THREE LEVELS

ORIGIN
Owes as much to the Indiana Jones trilogy as it does to the original Pitfall game released in the early eighties.

GAME BREAKDOWN

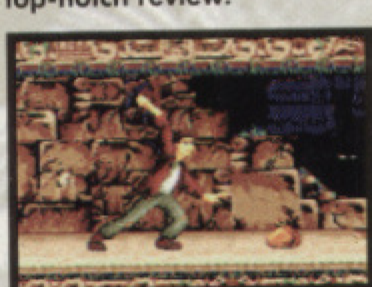


GAME AIM
Run around the platform levels collecting weapons, duffing up meanies and making use of the many background features.

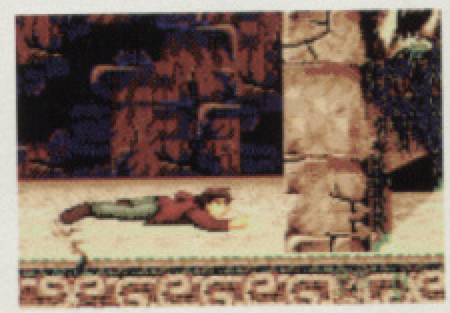
Pitfall Harry has an identity crisis - he thinks he's Indiana Jones. Then again, you can't really blame him, considering how closely his life mirrors that of the big screen hero. He's big and tough, he carries a whip and wears a battered leather jacket (but not a hat). And guess what, his Dad has mysteriously disappeared, just like Sean Connery did in The Last Crusade. Intriguing and some might say uncanny, really.

It's down to you as Pitfall Harry Junior to track down your Dad — using your superlative survival skills to make your way through the Mayan jungles, taking on the might of the natives, along with the jungle denizens and undead creatures that cross your path — just like Indiana Jones did in The Temple of Doom really.

Okay, okay, so we're guilty of being a bit cynical here, and there's no justification really, because Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure is a very decent, and highly enjoyable platformer — as you shall discover when you read this top-notch review.







The 8.25 from Timbuktu is subject to delays caused by vines on the line.



By the waterfall, basically.



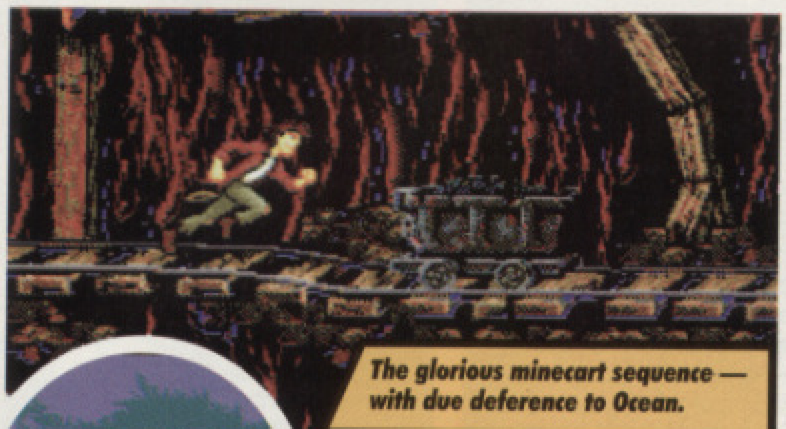




AND THIS TIME HE'S BROUGHT HIS DAD

Did you know that the Pitfall Harry seen in the early eighties Pitfall game is in fact the Pitfall Harry Senior who's missing in this game? You adopt the mantle of Harry's son, who just happens to be incredibly athletic. Running and jumping come naturally to this guy, as does a bit of good old fashioned on-the-stomach yomping. Harry Junior is also a master of the whip, which comes in handy for dealing with the enemy sprites. Other weapons such as smart bombs and boomerangs are also available for use against Harry's foes.





The glorious minecart sequence — with due deference to Ocean.







What we like to call a skellington in the office.

INDY CRAWFORD

There's no denying that Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure is a beautifully-crafted game in terms of visuals. It should come as no surprise to learn that the graphics and animation are the work of seasoned Hollywood professionals, Kroyer Films, whose projects include the award winning Fern Gully.



...the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or take arms...



Even the very vegetation is alive with evil...





INDY CAR RACING

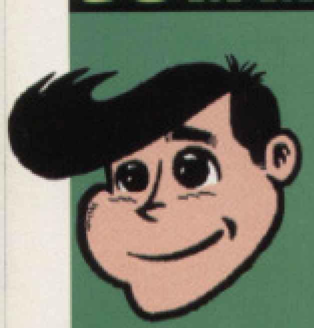
One of the best things about Pitfall is the level of interaction with the background. Look out for mine cart racing, Tarzan-esque vine swinging, spider-web trampolining, mystic idol spring-board propulsion — and a lot more besides.







COMMENT



RICH

The sheer amount of platform games, coupled with their high quality of late made me wonder if there's any room in the market for Pitfall. However, after a few hours' intensive play, I've come to the conclusion that this a very good game indeed. The graphics and sound create a tremendous atmosphere, whilst the gameplay is very rich and varied indeed. The level of interaction with the backdrops impressed me a great deal - and the game is literally packed with different hazards to overcome and skills to learn. In many ways, this would be the perfect Indiana Jones game (and let's face it, the hero is very similar to a young Indy). There may be loads of quality platformers about at the moment, but Pitfall is seriously worth investing some money in — it's a very rewarding experience.

Dope on a rope.





INDIE MUSIC

The music and sound effects on Pitfall are superb, with loads of decent sampled effects and a frankly stunning tribal soundtrack. Again, Activision hired top-notch Hollywood talent for this area of the game. Soundelux Media Labs handled the sonics, and they're responsible for films like Cliffhanger and In The Line of Fire - both of which have received numerous commendations for their exciting use of sound.



COMMENT

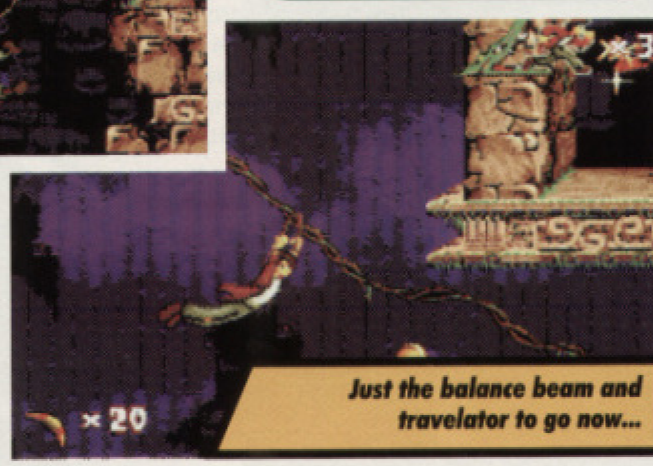


STEVE

'Aye, aye', thought cynical old me, 'this is that sod Mowgli in Jungle Book II.' But no, for Pitfall contains more variety than Virgin's conversion of the Disney game, and benefits in terms of playability and variety. Virtually everything in Pitfall's beautifully-detailed jungle can be interacted with, from the springy spider's webs to bungee snakes, and because of this the game flows incredibly well. Harry Jnr is equally impressive to look at with loads of animation and neat touches, a rather smart touch awaits anyone who reaches his Dad! Sadly, I'm old enough to remember the first Pitfall and can remember playing it to death on my wood veneer VCS)and it's included on this cart!). Thankfully, Pitfall Harry's legend is more than carried on by his athletic and far more impresive son. Superb.

Raise aloft the holy hair mirror of Pantene.

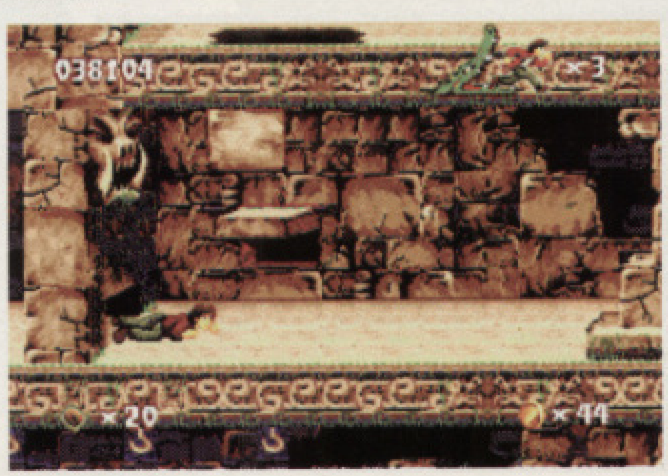




Just the balance beam and travelator to go now...

Action set against the great Urinal of Booga Booga





GRAPHICS

91

An excellent range of decent backdrops along with some superlative animation, particularly on Harry himself.

SOUND

92

Hollywood maestros were brought in to create this stunningly atmospheric jungle soundtrack. Smart sampled sound effects too.

PLAYABILITY

90

No complaints here. Pitfall is packed with loads of things to see and do. A nice control method adds to the enjoyment.

LASTABILITY

88

Plenty of levels to uncover, with a fair few secret bits as well. Even experienced platforming gamers should find this challenging.

VFM

87

The main Pitfall game offers plenty of value, and the inclusion of the old Atari version adds to the package.

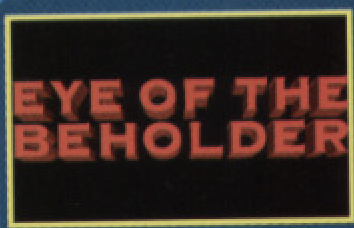
OVERALL

89

If you've a space in your collection for a new platform game, this is well worth consideration. Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure offers loads of excitement and plenty of challenge.


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EYE OF THE BEHOLDER



1 PLAYERS

CD

GAME TYPE
ADVENTURE

PRICE	£39.95
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	DECEMBER

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: RAM SAVE
SKILL LEVELS:1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
LEVEL 2

ORIGIN

SSI released Eye of the beholder years ago for the Amiga, and they are well established in the computer RPG field.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Traverse the stacked dungeon levels using RPG tactics to discover the ancient evil of Waterdeep.

One thing alone disturbs the elders of Waterdeep. Its prime position for sea and inland trade means its prosperity is assured. The people are happy, industrious and faithful. What could blight this seemingly blithe settlement? Only a perverse force like the one the city is becoming increasingly subject to.

Lurking beneath the city is an ancient evil. This is the extent of the divinations of the elders. To discover the true nature of this supernatural curse, and hopefully confront it, they have sent out for a band of adventurers, with a mixture of skills in sword, spell and sleight of hand. The best of these shall descend, prepared for denizens of ever-increasing malice and power to confront them. To the underground...



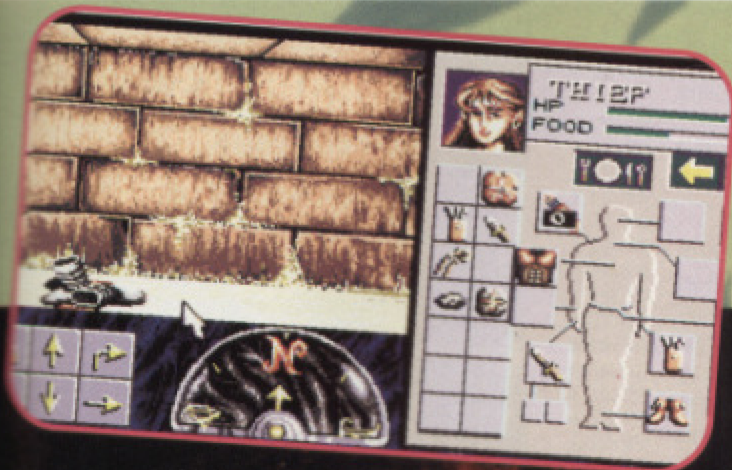


ROLL 'EM, ROLL 'EM, ROLL 'EM

Before entering the dungeon, you must create your four characters (or accept the computer's default party). There are four stages to this. First you must select one of twelve races. These cover the 'average' male or female human, elves, with their enhanced magical power, dwarves with their resistance to magic and others. Next a profession is chosen — with certain limitations according to the racial class. An alignment is then selected, which again depends on the other choices (i.e a Paladin cannot be aligned to evil or neutral). Alignment reflects the basic moral character of the person. Finally dice are rolled to fill in the character profile — strength intelligence etc. all have a bearing on events within the game.









BY HAND OR BRAIN

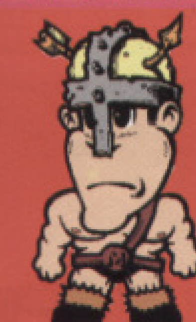
Down in the dungeon your party stick together, preferably with fighters to the front and spell casters to the rear. When you confront an enemy, combat is a simple matter of clicking on the selected weapon for fighters. Any damage you inflict shows as a green flash, while damage you take shows as a red flash. Skill, weapon and a random element go into the calculation of attacks. Spellcasters must prepare their attacks beforehand by memorising spells during rest periods. According to level, a quota of spells of various power levels is allocated.





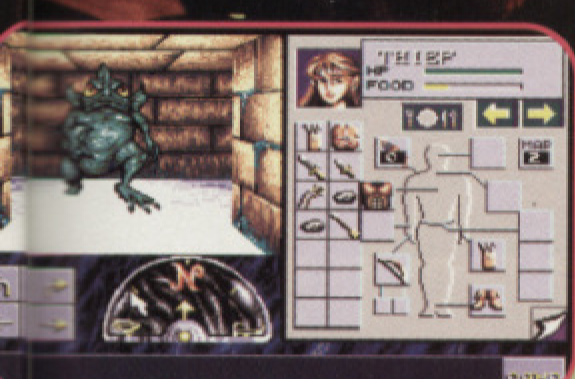


COMMENT



GUS

Amiga owners might scoff at the Mega-CD only just getting a game that has been out for around four years on floppy, with no discernible improvement in graphics and gameplay, but RPG fans will be more than grateful. The Mega-CD promised a lot in the fantasy role-play department when it first arrived, but in this country very little has been delivered. This is a timely redress, with great atmosphere (largely due to the music) and acres of gameplay. It will take a while to get used to the slightly confusing control, but the cursor and window works a lot better than lists of menus. Not state of the art, but an engaging diversion.

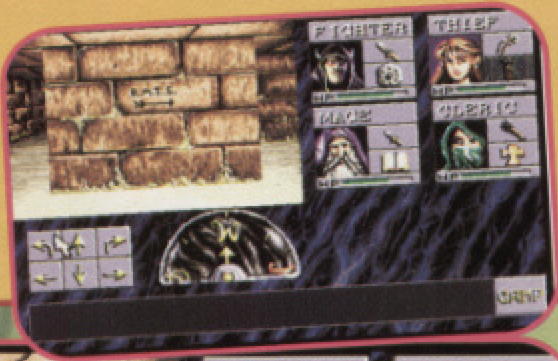






DOORS AND FLOORS

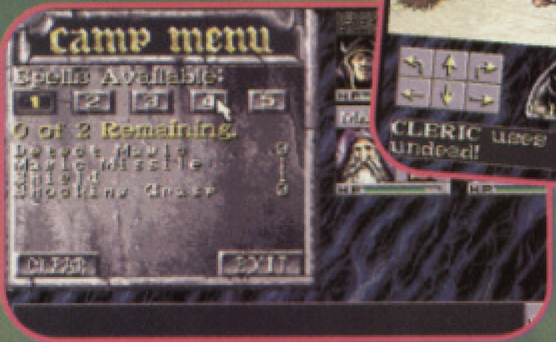
The dungeon is a ten level maze of corridors and chambers shown in a small scrolling 3D window. Many switches, alcoves and panels await your inspection.

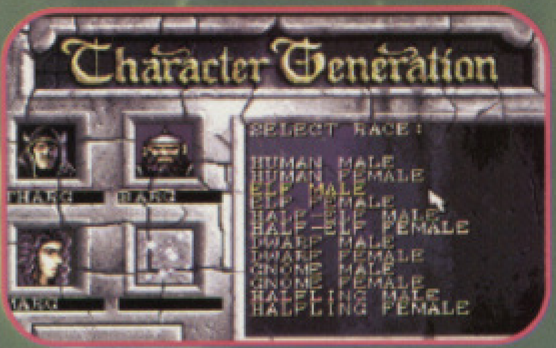






▲ *This worm has a nasty mucus problem.*





COMMENT



PAUL

The days of scrappy bits of squared paper and 20 sided dice are coming to an end. Admittedly the graphical content is very static – nothing more than a sequence of stills and a couple of animated monster sprites – but for anyone who's played Advanced Dungeons and Dragons to any great extent, the game has truly been brought to life. The control system and sense of direction may feel perculiar at first, but once you've mastered the workings of the battle system and compass, all becomes clear. In no time you'll be totally engrossed in the quest to solve the evil affecting the town. Above all, the most outstanding feature has to be the soundtrack. A word of advice would be to wear headphones to fully apprecaite the quality. This updated version has more than exceeded expectations and is easily a classic.

BLOOD CURDLING CRIES

This version of Eye of the Beholder benefits from CD sound. Lots of soundtracks are provided by Yuzo Koshiro, the maestro behind many a Megadrive hit, plus authentic effects of battle and deathly agony are included.





▲ *You may just catch the keyhole which Claire has helpfully obscured with a tilited screenshot.*

GRAPHICS 74

▲ Crisp dungeon graphics that convey the claustrophobic atmosphere.
▼ The game betrays its age with a dated quality to the graphics.

SOUND 92

▲ The main improvement of this CD version is a stunning soundtrack from maestro Yuzo Koshiro.
▼ The samples are so good, there could only have been more.

PLAYABILITY 87

▲ Classic RPG gameplay, but with a fast control method.
▼ Puzzles simplistic at first. The dungeon setting doesn't offer enough flight of imagination.

LASTABILITY 88

▲ 10 levels may sound small but they are massive, and some of the puzzles are obscure in the extreme.
▼ The real threat to lastability is frustration and falling interest level.

VFM 85

▲ RPGs are a rare commodity on console.
▼ A bit much for a four-year old Amiga game, which is on budget disks long before now.

OVERALL 88

Let the computer owners snigger at us playing this crusty old classic, for it is still a classic and gives hours of contentment. I mean, when was Kerplunk invented?



1 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
STRATEGY BLASTER

PRICE	TBA
BY	BULLFROG
RELEASE	JANUARY

OPTIONS

CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

1ST DAY SCORE
REACH LEVEL 3

ORIGIN

Yet another Bladerunner-inspired creation, with custom elements of Bullfrog's own 'God' games.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM

Extend the influence of your crooked business Syndicate by coordinating 50 separate missions across the globe.



SYN

Crime pays. Crime has always paid. Some people are caught and are made an example of (did we say Bruce Grobbelaar? Allegedly, and all that), and admittedly this can sometimes be bad for business. But the best away around this 'occupational hazard' is to organise your crime into a business, perhaps a 'syndicate' is a more gentlemanly way to put it. By being organised you can protect your members, keep the hiccups of justice down to a minimum.

And technology affords a second business plan. Just say your syndicate came into possession of some expendable assets. Just say these assets were vagrants and unfortunates, picked up off the streets, reprogrammed and built up for heavy duty enforcement action. No one is going to miss them. And as a commodity, they might open up gateways to expanding your operation, on a global basis.

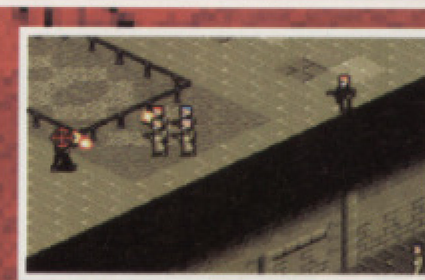




▲Someone ought to tell 'em about that Death Star, you know.

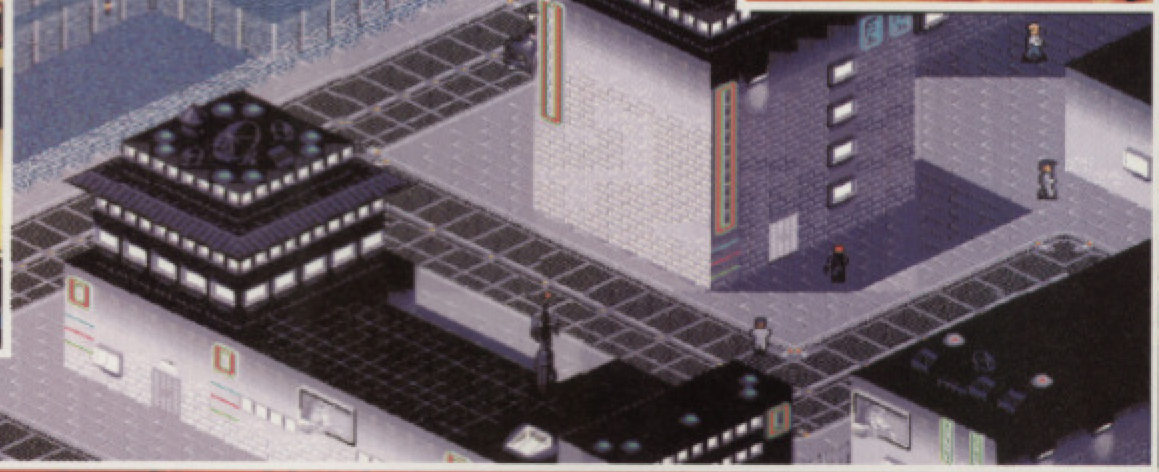
NDICATE





▲ Where's their Green Cross Code?!

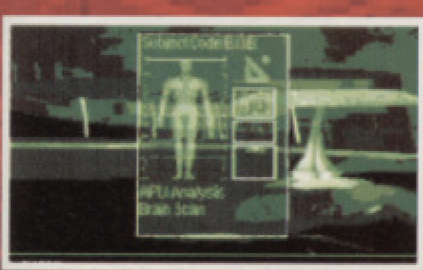






▲ I say, old boy. Easy on the chillis next time.

▼On tonight's menu, human cyborg.



ROTTEN TO THE CORE

The progress of your global objectives are played out over a series of strategic screens which precede each of the missions. Everything required to equip your agents and detail the mission is found here.

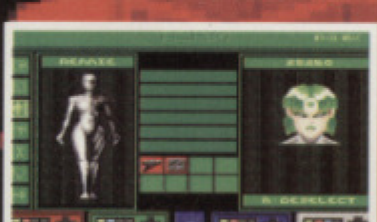


MAP SCREEN

A political outline of the future world. You must grab each of the fifty territories in turn to open new paths and exploit the potential for taxation.

TEAM SELECT

Take up to four operatives into a mission. This screen lets you assign individuals to the four colour coded boxes, and is used to create new teams after failed missions.



MEGA GAME

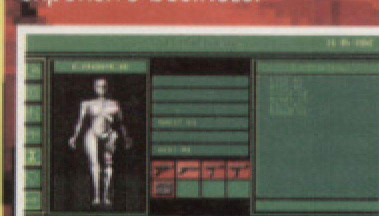
EQUIP

Buy weapons and items for each team member, and also sell weapons collected from targets that you do not require. Research increases purchasing choice.



MODS

Modifications may be made to your cyborgs. Arms, legs, chest, etc. have three levels of upgrade for improved speed, armour and target accuracy. Modifying is an expensive business.



RESEARCH

Develop new weapons by aportioning some of your proceeds into research. Graphs project the amount of missions between commencement and availability.





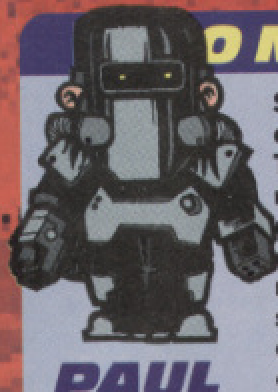
▲You feeling lucky, punk?



COMMENT

A Bullfrog game is a bit of event, and the bunting has not gone to waste celebrating this one. Syndicate is a big juicy steak of a game next to the wafer-thin sarnies that have passed for 'quality' releases of late. It has a convincing and compulsive plot, with each mission a 'chapter' in the development of your syndicate. The in-game action is much more 'hands on' the previous Bullfrog games, without totally eliminating the 'God' aspect that has become their trademark. After some initial faltering, you realise they have made a pretty good job of transferring the tricky mouse and keyboard control to a joypad. The minor gripes that make this slightly less enthralling than the floppy versions are the titchy scanner (very hard to read in a tight spot) and graphics of a chunky nature. Streets ahead of Powermonger in the action and accessibility stakes, and huge to boot.

GUS

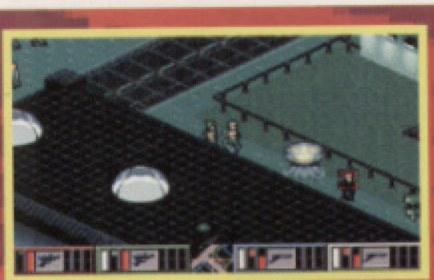


COMMENT

Syndicate on the PC went down an absolute storm. The combination of the isometric perspective, intricate mission objectives, and the cyber theme, broke the mould on slow-burning strategy games. So it's about time Megadrive owners had something similar to get their teeth into. Sure, compromises have had to be made in content – the original PC version sporting some horrific violence – and some trimming was necessary to fit it all into a cart. But nevertheless Bullfrog have done a superb job on the conversion, even making the game more playable than the original! Once you've overcome the initial hurdle of the slightly complex control system, you'll be engulfed in the sheer depth of the plot, desperately trying to complete the missions. Syndicate is a top quality title, and a must for RPG strategists who fancy a real challenge.

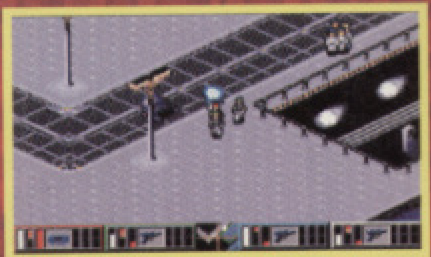
PAUL

SEARCH AND DESTROY



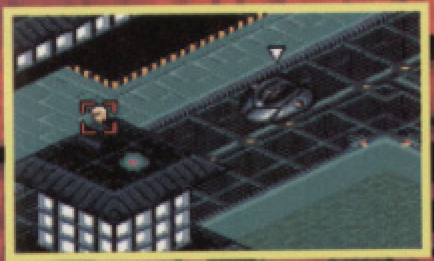
A separate briefing proceeds each mission, which have a variety of basic themes. Your team may be required to assassinate an individual or terrorise an area. The four boxes along the bottom of the screen contain info about your characters. It's easy to flick between direct control of any one of them, or group them together in a unit. A separate command will fire their weapons in the direction of movement. Additional commands allow you to split the party, leave them 'sleeping' or guarding a specific location, or sending your team into 'panic mode' — spreading death in all directions.

YOU WILL OBEY...



The Persuadtron figures recurrently in your operations. Carried by a team member, it brainwashes anyone he touches, turning them into a helpless follower. It's useful as a method of abducting key targets, even enemy agents, who can be reprogrammed at your HQ. The success of your persuasion attempts rests on a complex formula depending on the brain level of the operator and the amount of people he has already persuaded.

BREAK AND ENTER



The sprawling layouts of each mission cover many screens. Hijacking vehicles is a useful way of passing barriers and covering large distances. Finding your targets is aided by the scanner at the bottom of the screen, which leads you towards the objective. Negotiating buildings is made easier by the scanner revealing the layouts of building interiors.

THE RUSH



One tactical feature of the cyborgs is the RPI device. This injects a measure of three separate drugs into your cyborg's bloodstream. The first improves reactions and is a way to speed up the operatives; the second, Perception, improves your cyborgs targetting and sensory abilities; and the last, Intelligence alters the behaviour of cyborgs not under your control.



GRAPHICS — 80

▲Well contructed and convincing futuristic graphics, with lots of sprites moving with reasonable fluidity.
▼Some things are too small.

SOUND — 67

▼Never Bullfrog's strong point, and the moody snatches of music here and there barely make an impact.

PLAYABILITY — 88

▲Plays like Cannon Fodder for boffins. A feeling of control, but also pensiveness, as things can go awry in a split-second.

LASTABILITY — 91

▲Absolutely huge with 50 different missions. More variety than any of their previous titles. Absorbing gameplay with depth.

VFM — 87

▲A quality product aimed at a specific and appreciative market.
▼Cart prices always compare unfavourably with floppies.

OVERALL — 90

The best-rounded and most effective future-crook game available. Anyone with a brain should devote their attentions on Syndicate.


Someone told him he looked like a girl...
SECOND SAMURAI
SONY
ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING
Available on
Mega Drive & Mega CD
vivid image

NOVASTORM



1 PLAYERS

GAME TYPE
SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE £39.99

BY PSYGNOSIS

RELEASE NOVERMBER

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: NONE
SKILL LEVELS: ADJUSTABLE
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD
GAME DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE

1ST DAY SCORE
7, 700, 000

ORIGIN
The mixture of FMV and sprite technology, initially tried in Microcosm has been adapted to an interplanetary blaster.

GAME BREAKDOWN



GAME AIM
Destroy the four centres of corruption within the Bator system's software network to restore the galaxy to human control.

Cu-ut! Alright luvvies one more take and we'll call it a day. Now, Pete and Brain, remember you're disembodied heads. So a bit of facial expression wouldn't go amiss. And Mr Death Phoenix could I possibly have a quiet word? Look, mate, character actors like you are ten a penny, so less of the squawking, let's have more of the ultra-plasma torpedo scythe attacks. Quiet please. Act-chun!

Automation may save time, but doesn't half cause a lot of bother when the entire defence system grid crashes and turns on the civilians who built it. In answer to the problem, the powers-that-be have isolated the four mains areas affected by the crash (the volcano, desert, and ice planets, and the alien mothership). It is now up to you, the pilot of the highly manoeuvrable Scavenger 4, to track down the offending ghosts in the machine and save the system.



SCRAPE THROUGH

As if the enemy fighters weren't enough to contend with, the environment is just as deadly. A small bump against a canyon wall can knock off stacks of energy, just as a collision with a solar panel or a turret can wipe you out once and for all. Careful flying and lightning quick reflexes can save you a whole lotta lives!



BOSSES

Like the backdrops, the boss characters are all pre-rendered and stored as footage. This is not to say they don't feel the bite of your weapons, or that the Scavenger 4 escapes unharmed from their onslaught. These beasties pack a real punch and take dozens of hits before going down. On tonight's menu, here are a few of the chef's specialities.



CAVALIERTACTICS

Fancy a double — or even a triple-spread — laser? An extra smart bomb to help you on your way? Maybe just a boost for your Power Shot? You too can have this and more with the ever present, ever friendly power-up ships. Put one of these ships out of action and a choice of three power-up options will appear before your very eyes. But don't dawdle, snap 'em up while they're still hot.

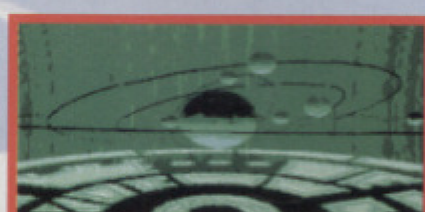


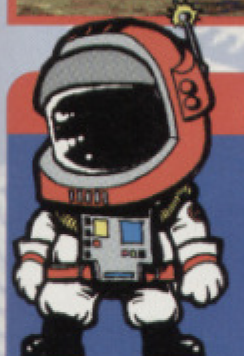


▲ *I, Bogorah the colon monster, dare you to enter my dripping bowel...*

▼ *It's one of those atom models. This is a proton, I think. A Nissan one.*



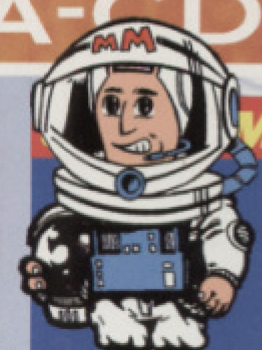




COMMENT

STEVE

Well, here we have another case of presentation over content. Strip away Novastorm's rendered backdrops and bosses and you're left with a game so simple even Forrest Gump would walk away in disgust. No matter how fancy the graphics become, you're still lumped with dismal blasting action which never changes. With so many decent blasters available, why settle for this piece of fancy but antiquated crap?



MENT

PAUL

I've been dying to get my hands on Novastorm for ages, and now after seeing the end result, I must admit I am a little disappointed. Don't get me wrong, the visuals are quite spectacular with a splendid opening sequence and some truly breath-taking end-of-level guardians. It also appears Psygnosis have ironed out one of the major faults with many Mega-CD titles – the interaction with the gaming environment, or should I say lack of it – by ensuring you fly within the limits of the landscape. But it's just all so samey. The course of the game is basically shooting repetitive waves of drone ships until you reach the pre-rendered boss character, and do the same again. After about the third or fourth voyage into the beautifully-designed landscapes you soon begin to realise it's all a bit shallow and predictable, and this doesn't bode very well when there are only four stages. Without a doubt Novastorm is quite clearly one of the better blast 'em ups on the Mega-CD, but still not that great in comparison to other great blasters on cart.

GRAPHICS

86

▲ Smart pre-rendered backdrops..
▼ At times the FMV gets very grainy, obscuring the detail. The rendered bosses don't react a great deal.

SOUND

88

▲ Above average techno beats and some juicy explosions.
▼ The music seems a little sedate at times.

PLAYABILITY

67

▲ Good blasting fare and some extremely challenging moments.
▼ It is very restrictive in its linearity and doesn't hold much variation.

LASTABILITY

63

▲ Well judged difficulty level should keep you going for a while.
▼ The action is too similar throughout to keep you interested.

VFM

71

▲ The slightly cut-price makes this seem an attractive purchase for Mega-CD owners.
▼ It's false economy, though.

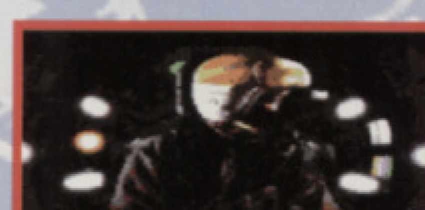
OVERALL

69

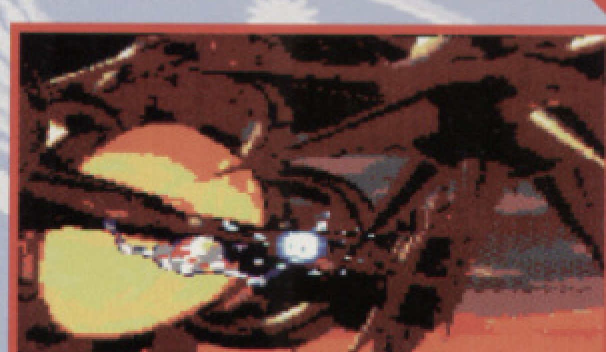
Novastorm is a very bland shoot 'em up hidden behind rendered sprites and backdrops. Only Tony Hart and fans of nice pics need apply.















1 PLAYERS | **16 MEG**

GAME TYPE
PUZZLE

PRICE £44.99

BY PSYGNOSIS

RELEASE NOW

OPTIONS
CONTROL: JOY PAD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS:3
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

1ST DAY SCORE
BEACH LEVEL 4

ORIGIN
The sequel to DMA's highly original Lemmings game, already available as an 8MEG Megadrive cart.

GAME BREAKDOWN

ORIGINALITY | REFLEXES | CHALLENGE | ACTION | STRATEGY

GAME AIM
By means of their skills, guide all the Lemmings safely from the entry point to the exit. Guide all twelve tribes to the centre of the map.

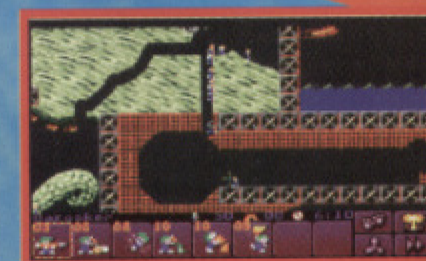
Lemmings 2 The Tribes

First there were Lemmings. Nobody knew where they were coming from or going to, but they were doing it together. Til death did them part. But after their first fifty adventures, something happened to make them go their separate ways. Some wanted to concentrate on sporting activities, some wanted to sunbathe in warmer climes, and some perhaps wanted to spend more time with their families.

In any case, there are now twelve tribes of Lemmings. This sequel follows the tribulations of settling in each of their twelve chosen lands. Watch them evolve dozens of new skills from their original limited menu, but see them offset by a whole new range of dangers — predators, devilish machines and long, long drops.



▲ Council Tax round here is a scandal, and don't talk about refuse collection.



▲ You take the high brow and we'll take the low brow...

COMMENT



PAUL

The days (and nights) of 48 hour Lemmings-a-thons are back! I was a massive fan of the original, and it's great to see they've improved on the highly successful format. The new icons are excellent, incorporating real imagination in design. And as for the new puzzles, well what can I say? They are tough! If remember the days of sweating over one level for hours on end, expect more of the same and worse. This will set your puzzle solving blood boiling. Hoorah!

RETRAINING

The original range of skills: blocking, bombing and digging etc. have been augmented several times, to encompass around thirty different types of Lemming. However, a selection of eight are offered on each stage, many of which tie-in with the tribe and terrain (pole-vaulting is a skill only employed in the sport tribe). Some of the new skills are quite sophisticated: archers and ropers can be aimed, and there is usually more than one way to complete a level.







I'LL BE BLOWED!

The fan is a new icon at your disposal, and is used to blow any of the flying varieties of Lemming, which includes ballooners, hang gliders and jet-packers. Positioning the fan behind the intended direction of travel is tricky, and adds a new reflex element to the game.

COMMENT



GUS

Lemmings 2 is certainly on a much larger scale than the original, but those who expect something radically different from this sequel may be disappointed. The twelve worlds differ in appearance and the range of skills is vast compared to Lemmings, but playing each screen is a matter of working out the logic puzzle behind it. Those into puzzle games will appreciate the fiendishness of the layouts and the size of the game, but fans of more immediate action may find it all too overpowering.





▲ *Old father Lemming tells a young Michael Jackson Lemming the stories of yore. Come and sit on my knee, sonny...*

RE-TERREANING

Each of the twelve tribal lands has distinctive scenery: spades on the beach, Nessie in the highlands and so forth, but many of the scenic elements have the same puzzle effect — blocking your Lemmings' path or putting them in danger. Some new ideas are employed, including moveable cannons which may be winched right and left.



GRAPHICS 68

▲ Lots of humorous Lemming animation. and crisp, readable layouts.
▼ You'll risk eyestrain with the titchiness herein.

SOUND 81

▲ Boppy upbeat tunes that set the marching pace.
▼ Rather infuriating little motets, and unexploited potential for FX.

PLAYABILITY 90

▲ Unbeatable in terms of depth, size and cunning.
▼ Lacks some of the options and ideas of Lemmings. Seems less friendly.

LASTABILITY 91

▲ More than enough levels for devotees, and many of them taxing. Three different marks of success to judge your performance by.

VFM 85

▲ It's not often you get this much game for your money.
▼ Quite a hefty tag for an updated version of Lemmings.

OVERALL 89

Good in its own right, but fails to fulfil the promise of the original.

PLAYERS	1
MEG	8
PRICE	£39.95
BY	US GOLD
RELEASE	TBA
GAME TYPE	DRIVING

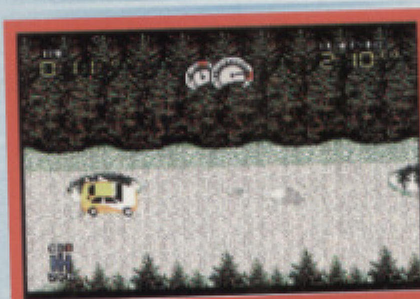
POWER DRIVE

As a kid (and probably when your Dad popped into the newsagents for some fags or the pub for a pint), how many times did you jump behind the wheel of his car and pretend to drive? We've all done it: sat there spinning the wheel from side to side making that 'brum-brum' noise that you can only do by sticking your lips out and blowing gently. Well, prepare to get tingly lips again, as US Gold invite you to get to grips with a rally car perfectly suited for the hand brake turns you used to make your dad's stationary car do.

Yes indeedy, US G are inviting you on a rally-ing trip around the world as you compete against a computer-controlled car across a series of courses. The action is viewed from an angled bird's-eye-view, with the two cars tearing around the eight-way-scrolling ttrack. Along the way, power-ups and cash bonuses can be collected, but the main prize depends on the player being the first person past the winning line.



▲ Step on it Starsky, or we'll have Dobey to contend with.



VROOM! BRAKE THE ZOOM!

As you slam your way around the desert, wet and night courses, your car takes some serious damage. Repairing such dents and knocks costs valuable money, and is deducted from your accumulated winnings after each race. However, if you want to risk racing with a semi-knackered engine you can skip this screen and effect the repairs after the next race — if you survive! One nice touch regarding damage, though, comes to light during the night races. If the front of your car takes too many hits, the lights flicker and fail occasionally, making fast driving even more hazardous.

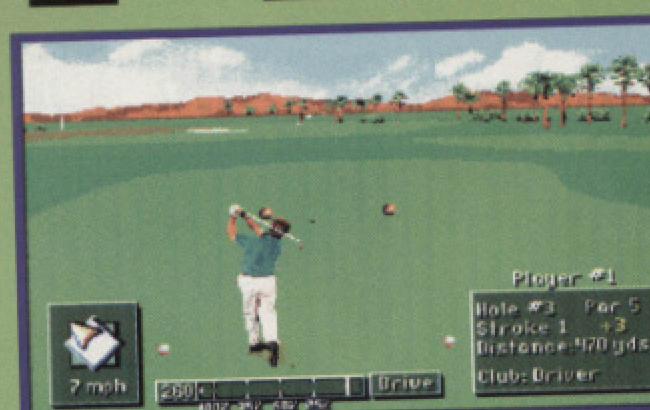


PLAYERS	1-4
MEG	16
PRICE	TBA
BY	SEGA
RELEASE	DECEMBER
GAME TYPE	SPORT

PGA III

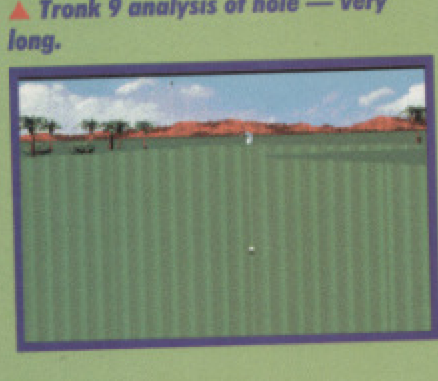
It has been a little over six months since MEAN MACHINES last got to grips with a PGA Tour game. In that time we've had a World Cup, witnessed a new Labour leader, and seen KFC offer a number of filling meal deals. Whilst this has been happening, though, EA's team of golf fanatics have found even more they can do with their tried and trusted golfing extravaganza

With the basic game engine remaining intact, EA have taken the opportunity to make the sprite animation smoother, added a new icon which allows you to add more accuracy to your shot (for more lift, etc), and more courses than Keith Floyd's menu. So let's don silly trousers and see what's on offer...





▲ Tronk 9 analysis of hole — very long.

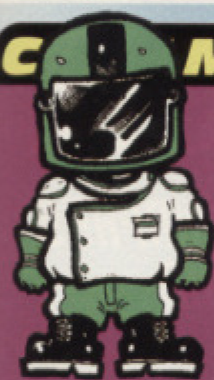


CROSSHAIR OF THE DOG

As with every PGA update, EA have taken time to tighten a few odds and ends and extend the game's accuracy a little. One of the latest additions to the game is a shot icon which brings up an enlarged picture of the ball with a crosshair directly over it. By moving the sight, extra slice or lift can be added to a shot, allowing the player to compensate further for crosswinds and hazards.



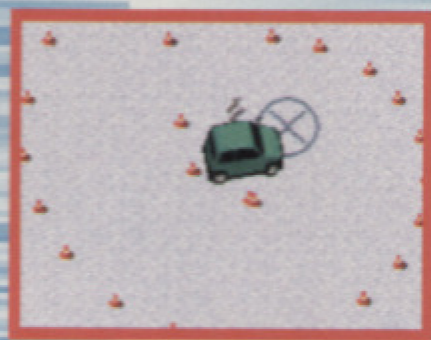
COMMENT



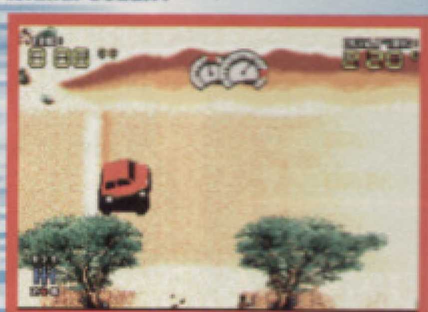
GUS

I prefer my racing a little more frantic than the sort offered by Powerdrive. While the rendered cars are nice representations of the originals and the courses are smooth-scrolling and detailed, the game seems to suffer from a distinct lack of action. With a field of only two, or on time trials just one, there's no neck and neck racing. Also, I fail to see the point of overlaying the screen with warning pointers at every bend. Surely the point is to learn the courses and use your own reflexes? Having said that, the game has pleasant qualities giving it the air of a relaxing Sunday drive: But on the Megadrive?





▲ *The driving skills test bit on Coney Island. Geddit!*



COMMENT



STEVE

Initially reminiscent of the old Super Sprint coin-op, Power Drive is one of a rare breed within the racing genre — a truly controllable game. Whizzing around the tracks requires real precision and timing if valuable seconds are to be sheared off the race tracks, and the time trials are an inspired addition. I couldn't help wishing at times that the tracks had a little more variety (the change of terrain only making marginal differences) and that the cars went a tad faster, but this is a very enjoyable game which may not push the boundaries of game design but is immensely playable all the same.

GRAPHICS 84
The rendered cars are a nice touch, and the courses are equally detailed.

SOUND 69
Intro tune and the usual vroom sound effects. A little sparse.

PLAYABILITY 87
Initially the car seems to over respond, but you'll get the feel in no time.

LASTABILITY 82
A lot of courses, which could do with a little more variety at times.

VFM 84
A packed 8MEG cart, which could have been so easily inflated to 16MEG.

OVERALL
Lacks the speed to make it a rally master, but one of the most controllable race games to date.

COMMENT



STEVE

Another Christmas, another PGA update. Every time, EA update their superb golf sim it gets harder to write about. Once again, they have managed to tweak the existing code to make the original beter, and the enhanced animation and better courses certainly do make a difference. However, in the time-honoured fashion, we have to say that owners of any of the others may not feel they are getting much extra for the outlay. That out of the way, EA are still the kind of the swingers — but how about a proper revamp next time?

COMMENT



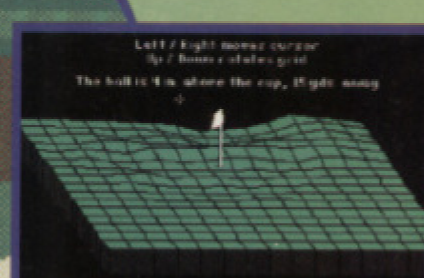
GUS

I'm rather impressed with the cosmetic updating on PGA 3, though let's face facts — the game is much the same in play terms as all others. But it's a very fine game indeed, as I've said on several previous update occasions. Basically, if you've just got a Megadrive, this is THE version of PGA to buy, but owners with earlier versions need not.









▲ *Brrzt whirr — Tronk 9 analysis of putting green. Scanning...*

GRAPHICS 86
The best-looking of the PGA games. The animation has been improved no

SOUND 63
No real changes here. A few swishes and thuds. Just like the real thing.

PLAYABILITY 84
More control over shots than ever before, whilst retaining its simplicity.

LASTABILITY 87
Two more courses , plenty of game options. A well-rounded golf game.

VFM 72
Not really enough in it to warrant a buy. The others are just as playable.

OVERALL 81
Another fine golf update from EA, but now it's time for something different.

LOADSTAR

PLAYERS	1
PRICE	TBA
BY	ROCKET SCIENCE
RELEASE	TBA
GAME TYPE	SHOOT 'EM UP



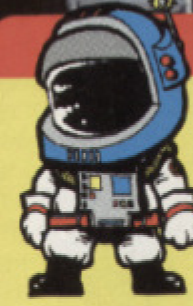
In the 21st century, the problem of clapped-out actors terrorising the world in sub-standard interactive movies had reached crisis point. In a desperate response, they were rounded up and shipped out to the distant colonies of the solar system, to find new lives as cargo shippers and satellite dish installers.

Tully Bodine is one such old sea dog, always in search of an easy cargo run or a flattering close-up. You follow his adventures from the point of a mysterious explosion on Pluto's moon, Charon, and a suspicious business proposition to ship camels from the Moon to Mars' satellite, Phobos. Are they in any way connected? The appliance of Rocket Science is sure to find a way.

COMPASS JAB

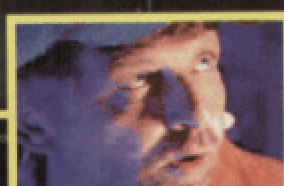
You have to locate your cargo by heading for the observatory, which appears on the sky-line as a growing structure. Getting dis-orientated is easy, but memorising the correct heading should simplify matters.

COMMENT



STEVE

Deary, deary me, what a tawdry piece of CD trash this is. Loadstar is another attempt to breach the game/movie divide only to fail miserably. Whilst the intro bits are quite comical, they're not half as funny as the abysmal gameplay. Repetitive shooting and minimal controls are the order of the day, leaving us wih yet another Sewer Shark travesty. Avoid.



▲ *"How am I going to get out of this turkey?"*





COMMENT



GUS

Loadstar makes me so MAD! This is easily the most infuriating piece of crap I've seen this year, and I can only pity the game designer who obviously fails to see it: 1) The control for choosing at junctions is the same as that of the gun cursor, so taking the wrong direction is a frequent and annoying event. 2) The onslaught of the baddies is impossible to repel, however much skill you employ. Death is often inevitable. 3) Accidents and other contrivances give you little freedom to select a route of your own, leading to torturous detours. Add an appalling lack of variety in graphics and ideas, a snooze-worthy video intro and you have a recipe for a real CD dog.

OFF THE RAILS

The magnetic levitation transport system is very simply controlled — just select a direction with the joypad when you come to a junction. It seems to be remarkably hazardous to travel on for a futuristic network: frequently you avoid accidents, oncoming traffic and lane closures by a whisker, or by letting off your horn.





▲ *If I had a pound for every 'twinkling space base' I've seen.*

999 SPACE POLICE!

The Moon sheriff is not your best pal. He's fat and hates you for stealing his girl many decades ago. His lummox nephew is out to get you, and legions of laser-spitting space police dog your journey.





GRAPHICS	**85**
Smooth video footage used in game, but little variety and crap sprites.	
SOUND	**78**
Okay FX, but the repetitive electro soundtrack really starts to get on your nipples.	
PLAYABILITY	**38**
As pointless, irritating and ill-conceived as games get. Falls way below even the level of Sewer Shark.	
LASTABILITY	**38**
Difficult, but guaranteed you'll throw the disk away in disgust within days.	
VFM	**42**
A Waste Of Money, basically.	
OVERALL	**39**
Rocket Science have cooked up a digital catastrophe.No redeeming features.	

PLAYERS	1
MEG	4
PRICE	£29.99
BY	VIRGIN
RELEASE	OUT NOW
GAME TYPE	PLATFORM

THE LION KING



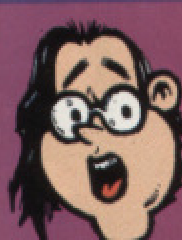
Dear evil uncle Scar,

Howdy amigo! Simba, your naive and gullible nephew here. Just thought I'd drop you a line to invite you to my pagan animal fruit juice christening where I'll be sworn in as Lion Prince, meaning I'll be king when my dad snuffs it instead of you. I can't wait! Anyway, I suppose this means you'll be reduced to opening supermarkets and things now, 'cos you're not a proper Royal anymore. In fact, you'll probably have to get a job behind the counter at McZebras. When I'm king I'm going to hand out free ice cream. Please come to my party.

Simba.

PS Please don't kill pops and overrun the kingdom with hyenas.

COMMENT



RAD

Much as I would have liked to hate this game, I have to say that it's actually pretty darned good. Fair enough, just about every game which hits the Master System these days is another platfromer, but The Lion King is one which is actually worth playing. There's a lot to see, the graphics are impressive given the capabilities of the machine and the title packs quite a challenge. Indeed, just about the only negative point I can think of is that of the controls, which aren't as repsonsive as I would have liked. Still this is a professionally produced and reasonably original platform game worth investigating if you've cash in pocket.



▲ *The egg-chasing bug-gobbling, I-don't-know sub game.*





▲ *Watch out for the welcoming party.*

KING FOR A DAY

If the thought of controlling ickle wickle Simba is in anathema to your sensibilities, take heart, for the Lion King game provides you with a brief opportunity to adopt the guise of an ugly warthog too. A twixt-level bonus game sees Puumba (for it is he) attempting to catch as many eggs in his mush as possible within a strict time limit without swallowing any of the evil detritus which reduces his egg-eating total. catch enough and an extra life (or two) is yours.

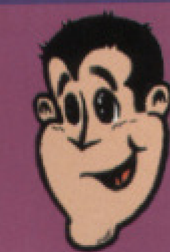
▼ *First ever cows on casters level in a video game?*



BE PREPARED (FOR TWO AND A HALF HOURS OF BOREDOM)

If someone asked us to impersonate a lion, our reply would probably go along the lines of "Roar! Roar!", for this how one speaks lion. Those wily Virgin programmers are obviously hip to the trip in this case, and thus Simba (in both young and old guises) can to use his roar "attack" to frighten smaller animals into subservience, thus allowing hi, t jump on their heads to kill them. Beats me why they bother. Sounds more like he's trumping to me.

COMMENT



GUS

No one is going to come up with Doom on the Master System. The days of experimentation with this machine are over, and competent platformers is ther best MS owners can expect. This is more than competent: nippy, enjoyable, catchy music (whatever your view on the film's 'score') and as much gameplay as the Megadrive version. The subgame is particularly well done. MS owners shouldn't feel left out of this Disney circus — this version is right in there.

GRAPHICS	90	Well drawn and nicely animated animal sprites with detailed backdrops.
SOUND	78	Renditions of the film's songs which are done neatly.
PLAYABILITY	85	There's always a lot to achieve in each level, making for a compelling game.
LASTABILITY	85	Not too small, that's for sure, and a stiff challenge on top difficulty.
VFM	88	You're getting a fair amount of game (ho ho) for your dough.
OVERALL	86	Raise your glasses to those happy people over at Virgin for this smart 8bit triumph.

FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

PLAYERS	1
MEG	4
PRICE	£29.99
BY	EA
RELEASE	OUT NOW
GAME TYPE	SPORT

The FIFA family is set to welcome a new arrival. One of the all-time smash hits on the 16-Bit systems, FIFA has incredibly made its merry way onto the Gear, and promises to revolutionise handheld football as we know it.

Weighing in at a mere 4 MEG, the handheld version is still loyal to the FIFA legend, capturing the isometric perspective and cart-load of options. But with all this talk of radical compression, does it have the power on the wing to top the league?

▶ *Cor, looks just like Fifa Megadrive.*



▼ *It really does look like Fifa Megadrive.*









COMMENT



STEVE

I would have thought this conversion impossible, but EA have really pulled out the stops to make Game Gear FIFA as impressive as its 16bit cousin. Granted, things can often get a little jerky and slow as the small screen struggles to keep up, but the basic playability is there, as are the wealth of shots and tactics. Sensi was previously the best soccer game for the Gear, but FIFA slips in to wow the crowd.

COMMENT



PAUL

FIFA on the Gear? Blimey! Talk about a highly ambitious conversion. But amazingly enough, it works. In the visuals department, the isometric perspective is pulled off to great effect and the player sprites are remarkably fluid. In terms of gameplay admittedly the action suffers slightly from slowdown, but not to the extent that it affects the playability. It's just a shame there's no two-player game link option. Good stuff.







FIELDS OF DREAMS

Incredible though it may seem, most of the match options have been included from the Megadrive version. A large proportion of the world teams are available for a kickabout, with the added inclusion of the opposition-bashing EA All-Stars ensures a challenge is always for the taking. Also for a bit of variation, the weather conditions are selectable from sunshine to raining cats and dogs.



GRAPHICS 91
Amazingly good perspective and action, but tends to slow down.

SOUND 75
Not so hot. The usual Gear squeaks and beeps.

PLAYABILITY 86
A bit confusing at times, but remarkable nonetheless.

LASTABILITY 89
Tons of options teams, and a tough challenge guaranteed!

VFM 85
A classic on handheld for under 30 notes.

OVERALL 88
A visual accomplishment on the Gear, that plays as good as it looks.

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MEAN YOB

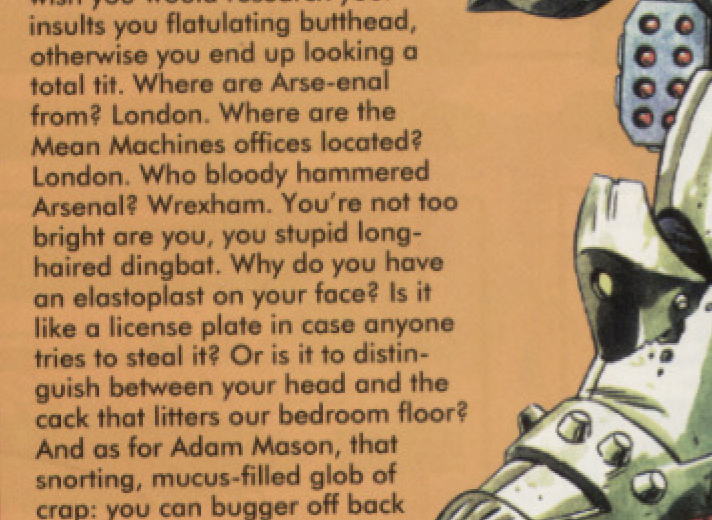


Deep within the sweaty buttocks of a lone mountain goat lurks a blood-sucking tick. Feeding off its host, the little parasite causes discomfort and agitation for the grass-chewing creature. However, as it is so deep set in the goat's colon, the little tick's safety is assured. Talking of irritating ticks, it's time for our resident goat, Yob, to fumble around in the depths of his backside to find suitable answers to your incredibly inane and pointless ramblings. Still, if you want to line up and clamp yourself on to his inner lining and ask a pathetically insulting poser, why not drop him a line at the following address:

**THE KEBAB MAGIC FAN CLUB,
MEAN YOB,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU**

THE PUSH

Dear Yob
Where's your originality, Yob, you pus-filled moronic zit? "Pointless goit" my name means, yes? Well it's nice to know you care enough to mention me constantly. I do wish you would research your insults you flatulating butthead, otherwise you end up looking a total tit. Where are Arse-enal from? London. Where are the Mean Machines offices located? London. Who bloody hammered Arsenal? Wrexham. You're not too bright are you, you stupid long-haired dingbat. Why do you have an elastoplast on your face? Is it like a license plate in case anyone tries to steal it? Or is it to distinguish between your head and the cack that litters our bedroom floor? And as for Adam Mason, that snorting, mucus-filled glob of crap: you can bugger off back inside Captain Birdseye's beard where you're wanted, you plague-ridden worm. It must please Yob to know he has one admirer left, you festering piece of saliva. It's just like Yob, the drooling spastic he is, to bring in his mate to try and stick up for his empty mind. Both of you resemble bits of plaque off Baraka's teeth. I, like everybody else in the world (except Adam Mason, that pubic louse), reckon you're crap. You just ain't as good as you used to be, you unsightly, stubborn wooden-headed onion breathed pickle.
Darren Ellis, Wrexham



▲ *Felt-tip Jim by Brett Jones from Ayrshire.*

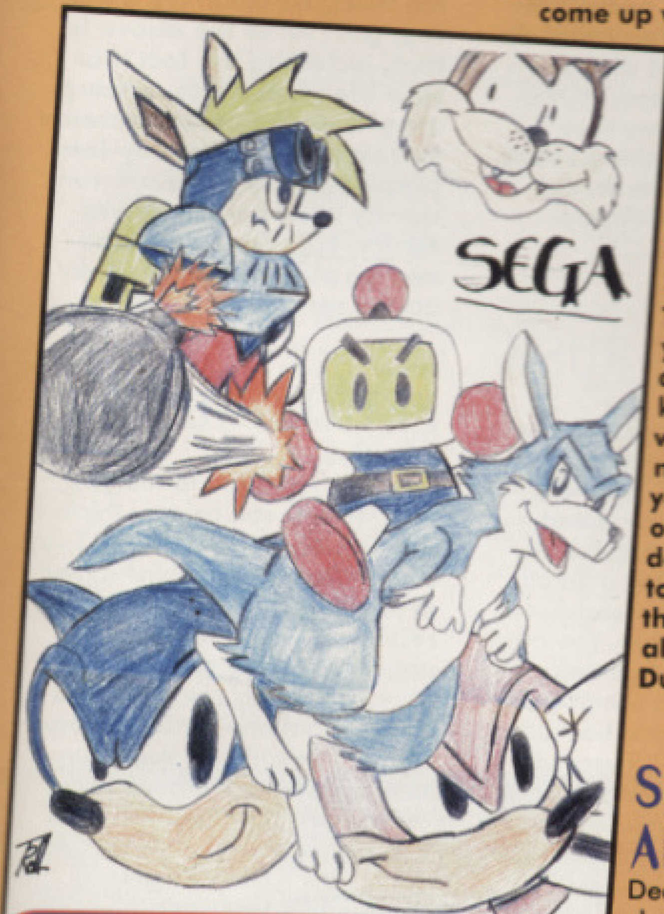
YOB: **You know, I could sit here for hours dissecting your letter and informing you of every major grammatical or structural flaw contained therein, but I don't have the space or the patience, and it's unlikely you'd understand anyway. If you're going to fire off insulting missives you should expect to have dirt dished in return. Look fool, if you've got nothing better to do than bother me constantly you really must have a very limited social life. Go now, for you suck and are quite stupid.**

GIVEN YOUR CARDS

Dear Yob
I am writing a letter of complaint. Most of all the letters sent to you are just mindless insults. What is the point of writing a letter if you are just going to dribble on with yourself in a pathetic attempt to amuse other people? Please print this letter, because I'm sure there are other people who feel the same way.

Joseph Farrell

YOB: **Look, what's the point in me writing a sensible reply when the majority of letters we get are just lists of pathetic, self-congratulatory jip-hurling? If you want a decent reply, write a decent letter you boneheads – is that concept a little bit too complex for you or something?**



▲ *A menagerie of Sega stars from the pencils of trevor Hambleton from deepest Devon.*

THE OLD TIN TACK

Dear Yob
Just a few questions. Who employed the dribbling retard to draw you? Your Mom? Oh sorry, your Mom is the dribbling retard who draws that crap picture of you, if you can call it a picture. We call it a pathetic turd. Was it your sister, Cob, who we saw in the zoo the other day smelling a tiger's bottom? She's so desperate, she does handstands just so everyone can see her knickers. Oh don't start crying you unfunny hippopotamus flea. And by the way, has anyone told you that you have face like a pig's jacksy that wears dresses and idiot mittens. I bet your bed has rubber sheets, and that's why you have to wear armour. Or are you just a leper and wearing it just so you don't fall apart? You fur-brained skid from Spender's jockstrap. You and your MMS gaming buddies have the ability of a fart in a wheelchair being pushed around M&S in Wrexham. Enough of our cussing, we still reckon you and the mag are ace, so here are a few pennies.
Richard Gardner and Kirk Churchill

YOB: **And it took two of you to come up with that, did it? Now, just to address one major point – you've asked as to who drew the piccy of me. Did you ever wonder why we have a drawing of me? Think about it you turds. How do you feel knowing you've wasted an afternoon venting your fetid spleen on someone who doesn't give a toss because they're not, actually, real? Duuuuuh.**

SPANISH ARCHER

Dear Yob
I am really quite narked off about the price of the adverts in Megamart. If you are the beast, I mean best (I Sensi Morta, THAT is how you spell best) mag in the cosmoverse, then surely you don't really need your readers to pay £1 for every 20 words. Also, why do you print saddo letters from saddo morons? It makes it look like only total idiots read it. Do yourself a favour and save the space! Well so far this letter has been a complete moan, and I would like to end on a more pleasant note – your mag is fab! Keep up the good work.
Danny Neame

YOB: **Have you got any idea how many people read this magazine? I hardly think one paltry pound, which isn't enough to buy a litre of tomato juice these days, is an extortionate rate to advertise your tatty Master System to a seventy thousand readers. As for why I print saddo letters from saddo morons like yourself – perhaps I just glean some strange masochistic pleasure from it.**



▲ *A footless Judge Dredd from Claire Coulthard (aged 12). She could go on to greater things. But won't.*

'EARLY RETIREMENT'

Dear Yob
Could you answer these questions for me all on the Megadrive?
1. Are there any football management games coming out?
2. If so when?
3. What is the best footy game?
4. What is your fave game?
5. Will there ever be a Sonic Kart?
David Croudass, Gateshead

YOB: **We answered all your questions, as requested, on our Megadrive. Thanks pal, we've now got a console covered in replies to stupid queries all over it, thus rendering it worthless. Don't bother writing again. And if you do, at least send your letter to the right department. Maybe the phrase "Q&A" is a bit of a high concept, eh?**



▲ *Oz's family portrait, as seen by Adam Chandler from Hybne in Kent.*

GOLDEN HANDSHAKE

Dear Yob
I have a terrible problem. I had the catastrophic misfortune of meeting a sad individual by the name of Joe. He thinks that flares with pockets in the knees are the living end. And his haircut, if it can be called that, looks like a blind man cut it with a Flymo. Besides this, Joe has two major personality flaws. One, he's a total mummy's boy who volunteers to collect



▲ *A ghostly Sparkster contemplates his name (well, I can't think of anything funny to write. Sorry). Cheers, Andrew Carr from Burton.*

rubbish for teachers, and two, I think he fancies you! He has every copy of Mean Machines and a handmade poster of you in a bikini. He is very disturbed. He is 13 and still in nappies. Please send him an early birthday pressie of some rubber sheets and a straight-jacket. Oh, by the way, did you know your name's an anagram of a way to warn people of flying insects...Oy! B! Ha, ha, titter!
Conor Ritchie, N Ireland

YOB: **And he wears flares with carpet burn-proof pockets in the knees? Come to poppa, Joey boy!**

MARCHING ORDERS

Dear Yob
First of all, Steve says there's going to be a Streets of Rage 4. If so when will it be out, and will there be a change of characters. I also noticed that Dave Franck from Belgium said Mortal Kombat II on the Megadrive is slow. Will the Shadow be out on the Megadrive? I certainly hope so.
Philip Smith, Kings Lynn
YOB:**Helll-ooo! Wake up and smell the coffee Phillie boy. Look, I know Steve has problems remembering to breathe sometimes, but if he says something is going to happen, it usually does. I also have it on authority the Megadrive version of MKII is faster than the Super NES. Next time have a look over the page at Q&A and stop wasting my precious time. Honestly, it's not as if I'm trying to explain quantum physics is it. Sheesh.**

ORDER OF THE BOOT

Dear Yob
I would just like to make a few points. Firstly, you are a turd-sucking mummy's boy, gimboid, goit full of crap. Secondly, you're the ugliest scum to walk the Earth, and your haircut looks like a brush. I hate you. Ha, ha, ha! At midnight I will attack you with an M-60 machine gun and blow your worthless head off. By the way your magazine is good, and if it wasn't for you I'd buy it. All you can do is slobber and insult people.
Jimmy Sadcase, N London
YOB:**Now Jimmy, put down the pen very carefully. That's a good boy. Does Mummy know you've got that nasty sharp object? Or is she out scraping the insides of her nostrils for your tea again? You could do yourself some real damage like poke out an eye, HOPEFULLY! Get outta my face before I say something really nasty, or even print those photos of you and Flossy. Remember? Baaa...**

THE BUM'S RUSH

Dear Yob
I am writing to tell you that you look like a worthless cross between a hyena's ass and a potato head from the planet slimeball. You are a butt-face and your mother was a gerbil who smelled like a sweat-filled pimple-ridden armpit. You have as much chance of getting a girlfriend as finding a winnit on a hairless Chihuahua's backside. You smell of 10, 000 year old pigeon droppings lying in a disused pet shop.Please could you tell which flea infested pit you slithered from...bleep...bleep...gee Brains what shall we do? Aaargh! Neeb, sorry about that, saw one too many Barbie adverts. Now where was I? Ah yes, insulting you. But then again you must be okay to read Mean Machines.
Luke Skywalker, Large Spaceship Directly Above You

YOB:**Okay, I admit it. You got me this time Luke. It's a fair cop, guv! All of the above is true, including the fact that your life amounts to nothing more than the pungent steam that rises from a freshly-laid cowpat and that you are constantly mistaken for David Mellor. Now be a good lad and go play with your slinky on the central reservation.**

LETTING YOU GO

Dear Yob
I am writing to you for the first time. The reason being, I think your insults are crap. Haven't you ever looked at your chin? It gets in your way at meal time, so the rest of your body starves. I noticed the other day, just how poor your family are, all of you living in that one cardboard box. I felt a little sorry for your Mum so I gave her a penny. Did you cut yourself shaving? You are a true life git.
Quay Voong, Gloucester

YOB:**Do the words 'sentence' and 'construction' mean anything to you? Some extra time invested in your school work wouldn't go amiss. And to answer your last question, yes I did, but it's gonna be a long time before you'll inflict any similar injury to yourself.**



▲ *Sorry, we don't know what this one's about. Or who it's by. Sorry. No, really we are.*

I really can't be arsed to write a large outro this month so, until next month: sod off you miserable beggars...



Many things in life are constant. We take everyday things like grass, Windowlene, and One Man And His Dog for granted, but what if they were to disappear. Lo and behold a nation of muddy shoes and sticky football pitches, houses with no need for curtains, and the most up-to-date television schedule since President Kennedy was assassinated. Another constant in life is Q&A. Every month, Steve sits around picking through your letters, grimacing as yet another MKII question unfolds before him. Still, life's like that. If you want to pick Steve's planet-sized brain — preferably about something other than a certain Acclaim conversion — drop him a line at:

STOLEN HOTEL SHOWER CAPS Q&A,
MEAN MACHINES SEGA,
PRIORY COURT,
30-32 FARRINGDON LANE,
LONDON,
EC1R 3AU

YOU'LL KNOW WHAT THEY'RE FOR...

Dear Steve,
I really need my questions answered so please print my letter:
1. I own a Megadrive with 28 games, should I sell it when the Saturn comes out or buy a 32X?
2. I have heard that the Saturn will costs £400-500, doesn't this seem a little ridiculous?
3. There seem to be loads of of good games out at the moment so could you please put the following games in order: Probotector, Sparkster, Jimmy White, Ecco II, Mickey Mania, Micro Machines II.
Matty Whyard, Toton
STEVE:1. The Saturn won't be officially released for ages, so why not wait and see how well the 32X does? 2. The chances are Sega will bring it down before the machine is released — especially since Sony reckon the Playstation will be between £250-300. 3. Micro II, Probotector, Jimmy White, Sparkster, Ecco II, Mickey.

OR THE DOG GETS IT

Dear Steve,
I think your mag is totally brilliant, so please answer some questions for me about MKII for the Megadrive.
1. Is there a Fergality cheat, if so what is it?
2. Is there a cheat where you can become Shao Kahn or Kintaro? If so what is it?
3. Is there a cheat where you can see any Fatality?
4. Are there any other cheats apart from he ones in issue 24?
Behrooz Khazanehdari, Cambridge
STEVE:1. Go to the title screen and select the Options menu. Move the cursor down to 'Done' and press L, D, L, R, D, R, L, L, R, R. A test menu appears. Select 'Ooh Nasty' and play as Rayden. Defeat your opponent and finish him by moving back three times and pressing block. 2. No there ain't. 3. Yeah, select the Soak mode from the said cheat menu. 4. Only what's in the menu.



MONSIEUR, YOU ARE SPOILING US

Dear Wise One,
I have a slight problem with the Fatality move for Kung Lao in MKII. It's the move that splits your opponent in half. When I go to do it he takes his hat off (ready to do the fatality), but the game freezes before he can do i. It has happened a few times and I thought it may have been the cart, but I tried it with my mate's MKII and the same thing happened! Could it be a fault with the game, I'm using a six-button pad.
J. A. Newman, Chandlers Ford
STEVE:I haven't heard of any similar problems, so it could depend on whether your machine is an import job. Try your cart on your mate's Megadrive and see if it still happens, if so call Acclaim on 071 344 5000 for extra help.

WHOAAAA, BODYFORM

Dear Steve,
I know you're busy and would prefer to go clubbing, but please could you answer my questions.
1. Were you taking the mick when you mentioned Fergalities. if it's a joke I don't get it.
2. Why do you reckon SSFII is a rip-off? Everyone asked for it,Capcom gave it to us, and people moan. I have it and I think it's fab.
3. The same goes for the Mega-CD. People knock it but I think it's brill. At least it gets put to good use (Thunderhawk, for example), unlike the CD32 which has just Amiga games with a crap intro.
4. Marky Mark had the Make My Video treatment, so why not 2Unlimited? They're dead popular and would shift a load of copies.
5. Edge reckons the Saturn will be out in November this year. If so won't people prefer it over the 32X? Yeah, the 32X is cheaper, but loads of people won't want to buy a machine that it outdated on release.
6. Is it true the 32X will work in conjunction with the Mega-CD?
7. I've played Lawnmower Man CD on the PC and it's fab. Will the Mega-CD version look, sound and play the same?
Chris Bigger, Accrington
STEVE:1. Me, take the mick? Never. 2. It's a playable game right enough, but it's hardly ground-breaking and full of new stuff is it? 3. I'm supposed to answer that am I? When the Mega-CD is used well it's cool, but few people bother so people get fed up. Simple, really. 4. At least you didn't request a Let Loose or Take That one, I suppose. 5. It's due for release in Japan sometime in November, but not over here for ages. 6. Oh

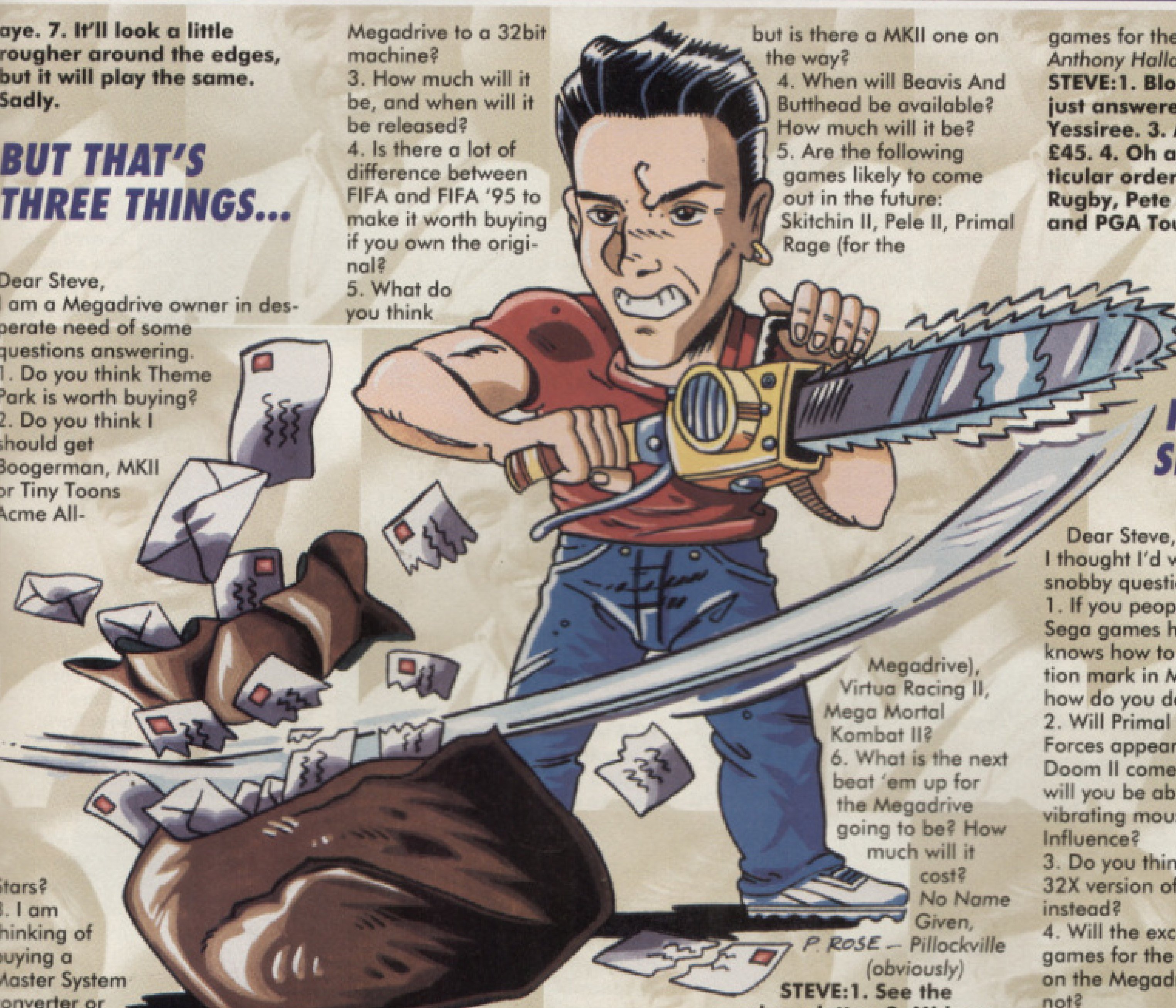
aye. 7. It'll look a little rougher around the edges, but it will play the same. Sadly.

BUT THAT'S THREE THINGS...

Dear Steve,
I am a Megadrive owner in desperate need of some questions answering.
1. Do you think Theme Park is worth buying?
2. Do you think I should get Boogerman, MKII or Tiny Toons Acme All-Stars?
3. I am thinking of buying a Master System converter or do you think I'm wasting my money?
4. Will there be a Mortal Kombat 4?
5. Is Mega Bomberman really as good as you say?
Simon Gode, Stourbridge
STEVE: 1. From what I've seen so far, yep. 2. MKII. 3. Put it this way, setting fire to the cash would be more beneficial. 4. Why, bored of MKIII already are you! 5. No we're complete liars. Of course it is.

SEE THESE? I MADE THEM ALL...

Dear Steve,
I have got a few menacing problems I would like you to answer. Cheers.
1. Will Theme Park for the Megadrive be released by Christmas?
2. What is the name of the add-on which upgrades the Megadrive to a 32bit machine?
3. How much will it be, and when will it be released?
4. Is there a lot of difference between FIFA and FIFA '95 to make it worth buying if you own the original?
5. What do you think the Christmas Number One will be?
Paul Harrison, Calington
STEVE:1. Nope. It probably won't get here until next February. 2. The 32X. 3. £170, some time in December. 4. Not enough to warrant a buy. The passing's better and there's more teams, but if you've got the first don't bother. 5. Lion King or Earthworm Jim. Either that or M People or Zig And Zag's new single.



THAT'S A CHAIR, THERE'S A BLANKET

Dear Steve,
I need a few questions answered.
1. Are there any cheats for MKII? I can complete it but it gets boring.
2. Are Acclaim making a MKIII? If so, are there any new fighters?
3. I know about the SFII movie, but is there a MKII one on the way?
4. When will Beavis And Butthead be available? How much will it be?
5. Are the following games likely to come out in the future: Skitchin II, Pele II, Primal Rage (for the Megadrive), Virtua Racing II, Mega Mortal Kombat II?
6. What is the next beat 'em up for the Megadrive going to be? How much will it cost?
No Name Given, Pillockville (obviously)
STEVE:1. See the above letter. 2. Midway are working on a MKIII coin-op, but conversion details are miles away. 3. Yeah, but not for a while. 4. It probably won't be released over here. As it's crap, though, who gives a toss? 5. Nope. Do you really want Pele II! Yep, nope, no because you've just made it up. 6. WWF Raw or Samurai Shodown, both will be £45.

WANNA SHOW ME WHAT IT CAN DO?

Dear Steve,
Congratulations on an ace mag. I have some questions for you.
1. Will it be worth buying FIFA '95 if you have the original?
2. From what you have seen of EA Rugby do you think it is worth buying?
3. How much will it cost?
4. Will it be available before Christmas?
5. What are the five best sports games for the Megadrive?
Anthony Hallam, Treorchy
STEVE:1. Bloody hell, I've only just answered this one! 2. Yessiree. 3. A snippet under £45. 4. Oh aye. 5. In no particular order: Sensi, FIFA, EA Rugby, Pete Sampras Tennis, and PGA Tour Golf.

WE'LL NEVER GET A PARKING SPACE

Dear Steve,
I thought I'd write you some snobby questions.
1. If you people are so good at Sega games how come nobody knows how to get on the question mark in MKII? And if you do, how do you do it?
2. Will Primal Rage and Dark Forces appear on the 32X? And if Doom II comes out for the 32X will you be able to use the new vibrating mouse I saw on Bad Influence?
3. Do you think they'll scrap the 32X version of MKII and do MKIII instead?
4. Will the excellent Star Wars games for the Super NES appear on the Megadrive. If not, why not?
5. How come in MKII you don't fight Smoke in Goro's lair like you do in the Super NES version?
Keith Dinlo (no name given)
STEVE: We've already printed it once if you can't be bothered to read it I can't be bothered to type it in again. 2. Primal will, but Dark Forces and Doom II probably won't. As for the vibrating mouse, I'd wondered why Violet had a permanent grin on her face... 3. Nope. 4. No, because they are reliant on Mode 7 gubbins which the Megadrive can't do. 5. Because of memory restraints.

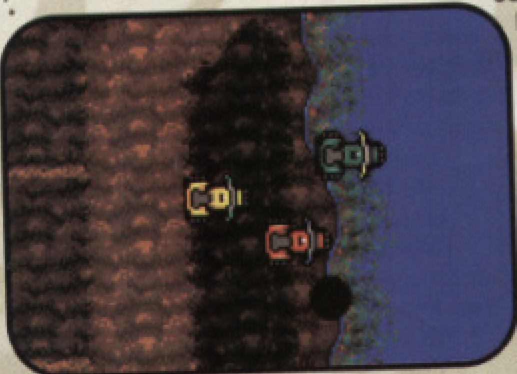
WE HAD BOLOGNESE, TOO

Dear Steve,
Please print these questions because my finger is throbbing from typing it in.
1. I am thinking of getting a Megadrive for Christmas. Which is the best pack to get?

2. What is the best two-player game out at the moment?
3. Is the game Die Hard III coming out for the Megadrive?
4. What do you think is the best character in Ballz?
Andrew, Northampton
STEVE: 1. The cheapest. 2. Mega Bomberman. 3. No, but Die Hard Trilogy is coming up for the 32X. 4. Surely you mean 'which character'? It's Divine, anyway.

HE THOUGHT HARVEY WALL-BANGER

Dear Steve,
Your mag gets better and better each month, so I would appreciate it if you would answer my questions.
1. Which would you recommend out of the Saturn and the 32X, and why?
2. Will there be a conversion of Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis for the Saturn or 32X?
3. When is Primal Rage coming out for the Megadrive?



4. Will there be a conversion of SSFII, MKII and Primal Rage for the 32X and Saturn?
5. Are there plans for a conversion of the excellent C64 platformer Creatures to the Megadrive?
6. How can I get a job designing games for major companies like Sega and Electronic Arts?
7. How would you rate these games from best to worst: Shining Force II, Micro Machines II, Leemings II, Earthworm Jim, Mega Bomberman, FIFA '95, Jimmy White Snooker, Theme Park, Landstalker.
8. When is Soleil coming out?
A. Breatwach, Dun-Laoghaire
STEVE: 1. I'd recommend both, but you've got a long wait for the UK Saturn. Why? Because they're the future, that's why. 2. Nope. 3. Late 1995. 4. SSF hasn't been confirmed but the other two have. 5. None whatsoever. 6. Put some ideas together and send them in. 7. They're all pretty cool, and far too different to put in order. By the way, what's Leemings II — a newsreader game? 8. February.

EXTERIOR LUSTRE REFRESHER

Dear Steve,
Please answer these few humble questions for me.
1. When will the VR unit for the Megadrive be released in the UK?
2. Can the VR unit be used with the 32X? If not will there be one that is and how much will it cost?
3. Will Virtua Fighter and Daytona be released for the 32X?
4. Does the 32X have RAM data to store information?
5. I found a cheat for Sonic CD with the programming teams' best scores. I can't get it to work again, though, can you print the scores for me?
James McDonald, Ayrshire
STEVE:1. It won't, Sega have scrapped it. 2. Nope, so you can stop saving for it. 3. Nope. 4. It doesn't need it, but, as with Megadrive titles, battery back-up will be used in certain carts for games that need it. 5. No.

HIS DOG: FETCH ARMSTRONG

Dear Steve,
Could you please answer these questions.
1. Will any football games be released on the 32X? I thought FIFA on the 3DO was excellent.
2. I thought that your review of FIFA '95 wasn't too fair as it only got 92% and you said it was better than the first FIFA which got 94%. Why did you do that?
3. Can you list these games from best to worst: FIFA '95, FIFA, Dino Dini, Kick Off III, Sensible Soccer, Pele, Giggs, and J-League Pro Striker?
4. I thought the review of Star Wars Arcade was brilliant, will you be reviewing any more 32X games?
5. When the 32X is released I will buy it with a copy of Doom. Is it better than the PC version?
6. In issue 26 some geezer asked how much the 32X will cost and you said £170. But I've seen a shop saying they'll sell it for £130. How come you said that?



7. And last but not least can I have the autographs of everyone who works on MEAN MACHINES SEGA?
Jason Bennett, Beighton
STEVE:1. Konami's brilliant Super NES game Perfect Eleven (AKA International Superstar Soccer) is heading for the 32X, and I reckon FIFA will tip up sooner or later. 2. A lot of progress has been made in the year between the two games, and we felt that, although FIFA '95 was good, it could have been a lot better. Put it this way, if the original FIFA was to be released today, it would probably score in the region of 87%, simply because games date. 3. FIFA '95, Sensi, J-League, FIFA, Dino, Kick Off III, Giggs. Oh, and Pele rots at the bottom of the pile. 4. Yep, see this issue. And the next. 5. It has less levels and a smaller play screen, but is every bit as playable. 6. £170 is Sega's recommended price, if someone wants to sell it for less that's up to them, not me. 7. Don't be sad.

I MUST BE MAD

Dear Steve,
Congratulations on another totally fabulous mag. Could you please ask yourself the following Qs for me and tell me the answers.
1. I read about Pirates Gold fore the Megadrive in your mag, when is it coming out, and how much will it cost?
2. Which is the best: Theme Park, Virtua Racing, SSFII, or MKII?
3. Is there a new Olympic-style four-player game on the cards?
4. How much will the 32X cost and will it be worth it?
Peter Curran, Gloucester
STEVE:1. It's out on import, but Microprose haven't got round to releasing it yet, and it isn't on their immediate schedule as far as we know. 2. MKII, but Theme Park isn't out yet so doesn't even enter the question. 3. Yep, US Gold have a new Olympic game on the cards. but not until next year. 4. £170, yes. By the way, aren't you the cheeky lad lead singer from out of D:Ream. I think you're crap.

THAT'LL BE THAT SADDLE

Dear Steve,
Here are some questions you'll undoubtedly be able to answer.
1. There are 8, 16, 32, and 64bit consoles. What is the limit?
2. The next games I am considering for my Megadrive are Earthworm Jim, Theme Park, Sonic and Knuckles, or Virtua Racing. Which one do you think I should get?
3. I have heard that Nintendo plans to snatch all future Mortal Kombat games. Is this true and will Sega ever get the lightest whiff of any MK games?
5. When all these new breed machines have been released, will everyone ignore the 8 and 16bit systems?
Joseph Farrell, No Fixed Abode
STEVE: 1. The sky. 2. Earthworm Jim. 3. Nintendo have signed a deal with MK developers Midway to ensure they get all future MK games for their systems. This doesn't mean they won't appear on the Megadrive or future Sega formats, though. 5. Eventually, yes. That's the price of progress I'm afraid. By the way, what happened to question 4?

Well, that's another month's questions out of the way. I'm off to play with the office Kebab Magic. Hmmm, broccoli and banana today, I reckon...

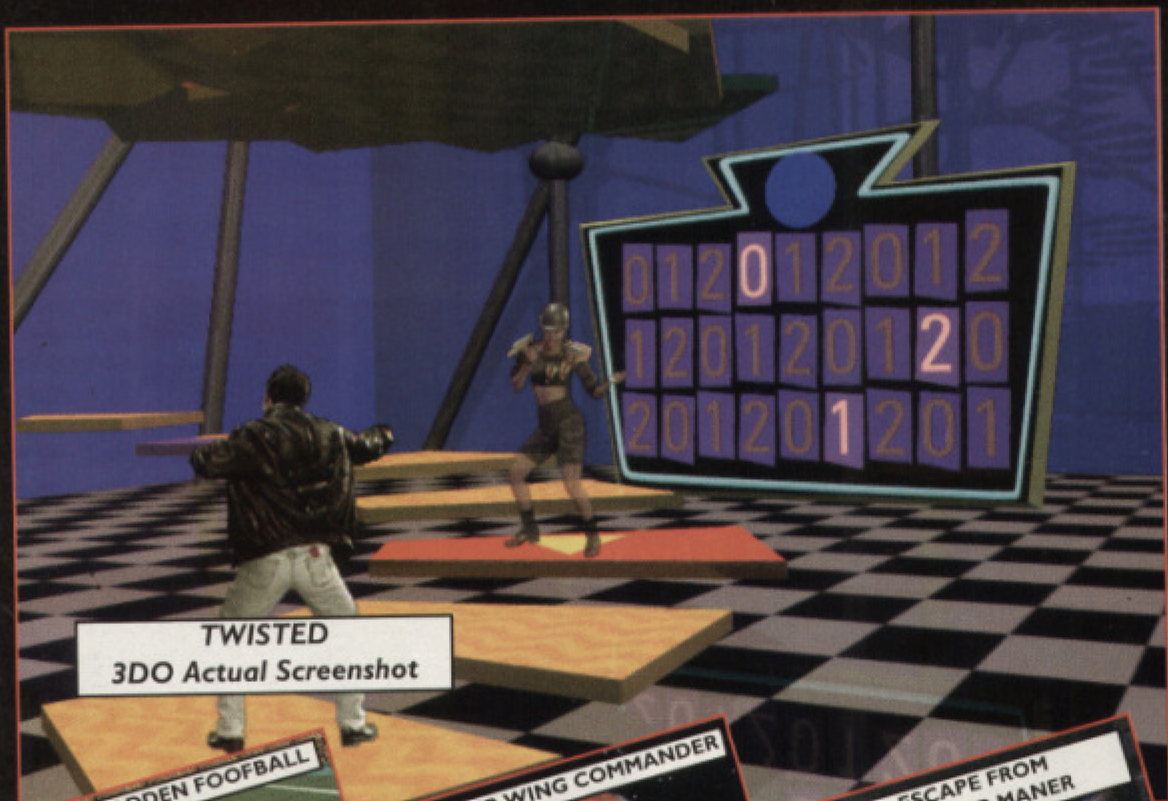

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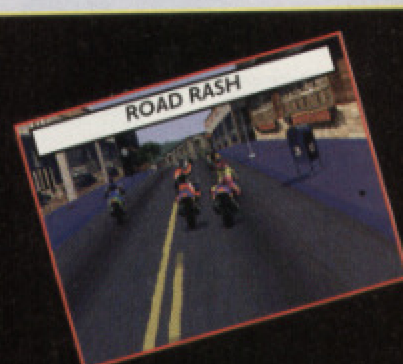
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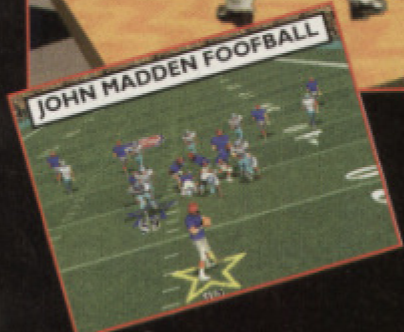
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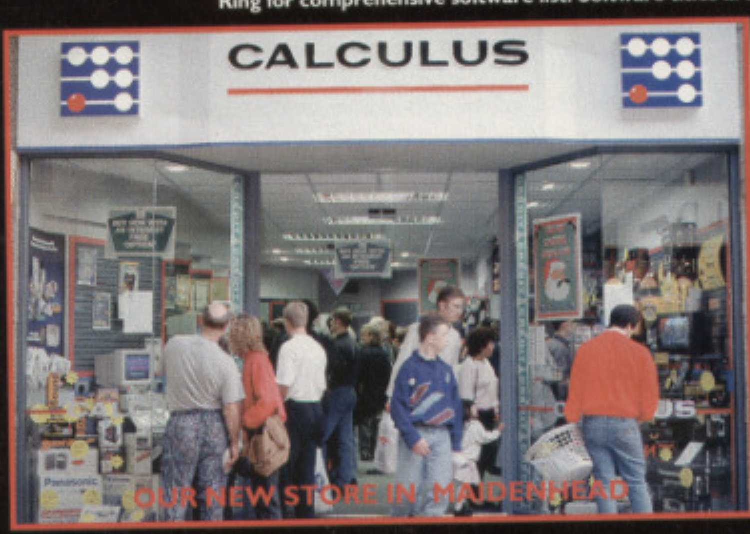
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NEXT MONTH

SATURNALIA

Ancient Roman festival of antiquity held during December. The inspiration for the Christian festival of Christmastide. Saturnalia — a time of wild elation and merry-making, the temporary abandonment of social restrictions. An orgy of pleasure and a feast of misrule.



SATURN 1

2000BC Roman god of antiquity. Later associated with Greek Kronos or folklore 'Old Father Time', or double-faced Janus. Celebrated in sixth day of Roman weekly cycle, Saturday. Depicted as scythe carrying. In astrology, force of restriction and compliance, enforcement, natural power. Revered as ancient ruler of mythical Golden Age of man. Elemental association with lead.

SATURN 2

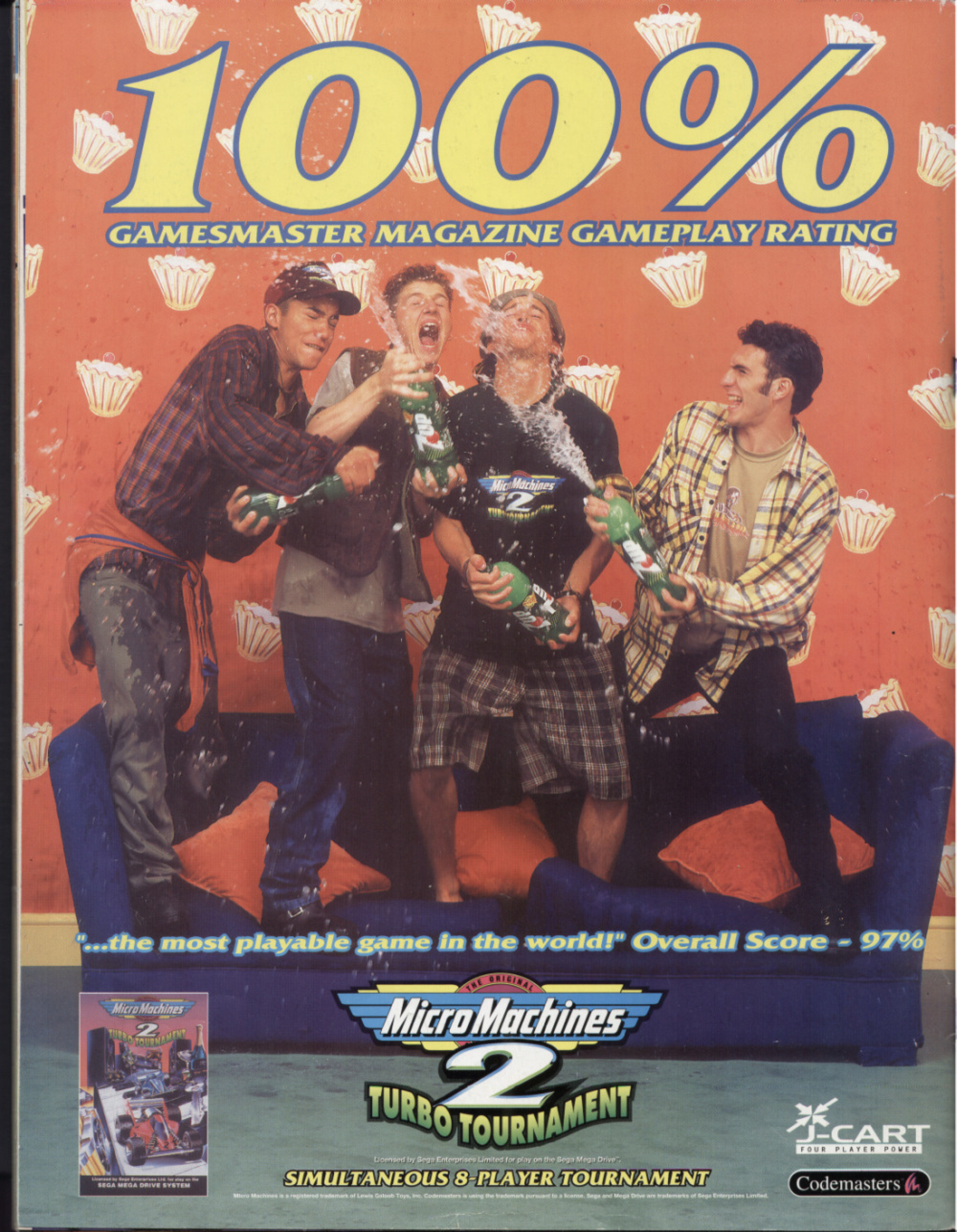
1400 AD Mysterious eighth planet of Solar System. Second in mass after Jupiter. Eight recognised moons. Distinctive double concentric rings consisting of rock debris and gaseous matter. Visited first by Voyager probes of late 1970s

SATURN 3

1994 AD New CD based video game system from Sega launched in Japan. 32-bit RISC processing. Custom graphics/sound processing for digital stereo and polygon handling. 1M projected sales in twelve months. Import availability from December. Access to Sega Virtua arcade catalogue. Arrives at MEAN MACHINES for Saturnalia.

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